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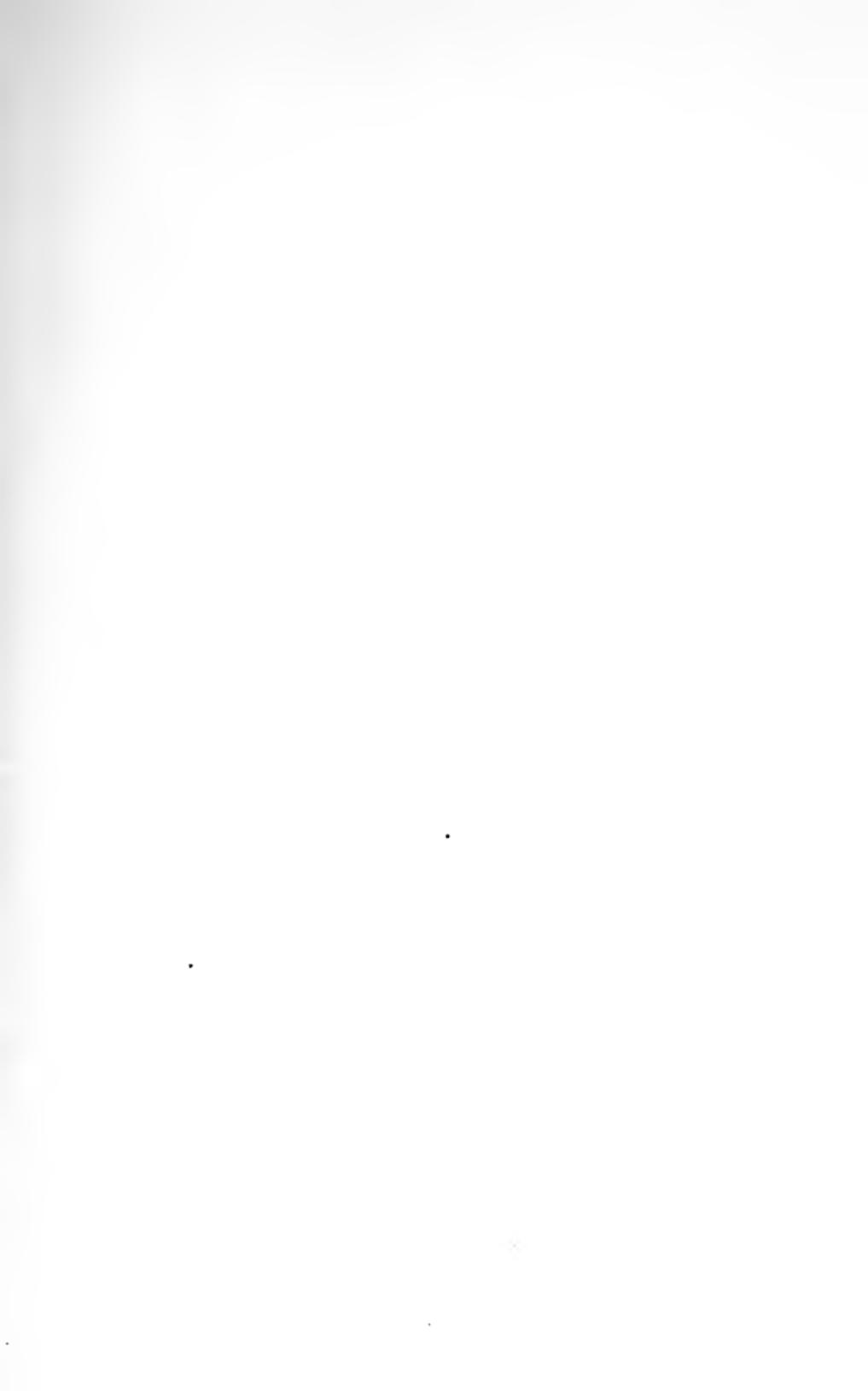
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THE VERSES OF  
JAMES W. FOLEY  
VOL. III



# THE VERSES OF JAMES W. FOLEY

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BOOK OF LIFE AND LAUGHTER

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AUTHOR'S COMPLETE EDITION

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R. D. HOSKINS, Publisher  
Bismarck, North Dakota

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JAMES W. FOLEY



TO THE TEACHERS AND PUPILS IN THE SCHOOLS  
OF MY STATE  
WHO HAVE BEEN A CONTINUAL INSPIRATION  
AND TO THE PEOPLE OF NORTH DAKOTA  
WHO HAVE HONORED AND ENCOURAGED ME BEYOND MY  
ABILITY TO REWARD  
THESE VERSES ARE DEDICATED



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## ONE OF THESE DAYS

SAY! Let's forget it! Let's put it aside;  
Life is so large and the world is so wide;  
Days are so short and there's so much to do;  
What if it was false—there's plenty that's true.  
Say! Let's forget it! Let's brush it away,  
Now and forever, so what do you say?  
All of the bitter words said may be praise  
One of these days.

Say! Let's forgive it! Let's wipe off the slate.  
Find something better to cherish than hate.  
There's so much good in the world that we've had,  
Let's strike a balance and cross off the bad.  
Say! Let's forgive it, whatever it be,  
Let's not be slaves when we ought to be free,  
We shall be walking in sunshiny ways  
One of these days.

Say! Let's not mind it! Let's smile it away;  
Bring not a withered rose from yesterday;  
Flowers are so fresh by the wayside and wood.  
Sorrows are blessings but half understood;  
Say! Let's not mind it, however it seems;  
Hope is so sweet and holds so many dreams;  
All of the sere fields with blossoms shall blaze  
One of these days.

## ONE OF THESE DAYS

Say! Let's not take it so sorely to heart;  
Hates may be friendships just drifted apart.  
Failure be genius not quite understood;  
We could all help folks so much if we would.  
Say! Let's get closer to somebody's side,  
See what his dreams are and learn how he tried;  
See if our scoldings won't give way to praise  
One of these days.

Say! Let's not wither! Let's branch out and rise  
Out of the byways and nearer the skies.  
Let's spread some shade that's refreshing and deep  
Where some tired traveler may lie down and sleep.  
Say! Let's not tarry! Let's do it right now;  
So much to do if we just find out how;  
We may not be here to help folks or praise  
One of these days!

## TECHNIQUE

I TAKE a little bunch of words and set 'em in a row,  
I take a little bit of ink and mark 'em down just so;  
I take a little time and pains and then I have a verse  
That starts about like this one does or maybe slightly  
worse.

And then I go back to the start and criss and cross and  
scratch

And vaccinate my words until I find me some that  
match

The pretty thoughts that dart about like silver fish  
and shine,

But need a patient, watchful hook to get 'em on the  
line.

My thoughts melt into words sometimes—not always  
—now and then,

And I can feel 'em coming down my arm and through  
my pen,

I only have to push it o'er the paper and it spells  
For you and all my other chums the things my fancy  
tells;

Just like a boy with building blocks, I move my words  
about

When I have something in my mind and try to work  
it out,

Until in orderly array I get 'em in a row  
Just as I think they ought to be and write 'em down  
just so.

## TECHNIQUE

And so just with some words I paint the pictures that  
I think,  
The boys and girls who live in me and set 'em down in  
ink,  
And sometimes there's a tear in it, and sometimes there's  
a smile,  
And there is many a grassy bank and many a vine  
grown stile;  
And many a lane that you would know if you could be  
with me,  
To look right where my pen is now and I could help  
you see;  
I merely take a lot of words and place 'em in a row  
And build such pretty things if I can get 'em down  
just so!

## MAKE-BELIEVE

LET's dream, like the child in its playing;  
Let's make us a sky and a sea;  
Let's change the things 'round us by saying  
They're things that we wish them to be;  
And if there is sadness or sorrow,  
Let's dream till we charm it away;  
Let's learn from the children and borrow  
A saying from Childhood—"Let's Play."

Let's play that the world's full of beauty;  
Let's play there are roses in bloom;  
Let's play there is pleasure in duty  
And light where we thought there was gloom;  
Let's play that this heart with its sorrow  
Is bidden be joyous and glad;  
Let's play that we'll find on tomorrow  
The joys that we never have had.

## MAKE-BELIEVE

Let's play that regret with its ruing  
Is banished forever and aye ;  
Let's play there's delight but in doing ;  
Let's play there are flowers by the way ;  
However the pathway seem dreary,  
Wherever the footsteps may lead ;  
Let's play there's a song for the weary  
If only the heart will give heed.

Let's play we have done with repining ;  
Let's play that our longings are still ;  
Let's play that the sunlight is shining  
To gild the green slope of the hill ;  
Let's play there are birds blithely flinging  
Their songs of delight to the air ;  
Let's play that the world's full of singing,  
Let's play there is love everywhere.

## DEAD HOPES

I SHALL have treasures from far distant isles,  
When my ship shall come in.  
Treasures of Hope and freight of sunny smiles,  
When my ship shall come in.  
What ho, my lads! Faith, Effort and Good Hope!  
Fling out the sail and heave ye forth the rope!  
Good cheer, my lads! What of the tempest's din?  
Steer true, my lads! The battle we shall win,  
And my ship shall come in!

Who has upon the deep no argosies  
That someday shall come in?  
Who has no Hopes upon the storm-lashed seas  
That someday shall come in?  
Who builds no signal fire along the shore?  
Who prays not, in the storm's unceasing roar,  
That Fortune may God-speed his craft and save  
His freight of hope from rock and reef and wave,  
That his ship may come in?

Yet, Ah! The ships set forth upon the sea  
That never shall come in!  
The Hopes, with flashing sails, for you and me,  
That never shall come in!  
The sad-eyed ones who watch above the wave  
O'er the vast deep of life which is the grave  
For countless throbbing hopes! The trembling lips  
That quiver, when they would welcome the ships  
That never shall come in!

## SHAMS

UPON the stage it is our task  
To picture nature, true, exact,  
'Tis off the stage we don the mask,  
And in our lives we needs must act.

The crown and robe, the shield and greave,  
The player fits as needs his art,  
Life uses only to deceive,  
The trappings but conceal the part.

The footlight beggar's practiced palms  
Outstretched, beseeching, speak his breed ;  
Life's beggar, proud, conceals his alms  
And with a lie would hide his need.

The studied sigh, the graceful art,  
The practiced ardor in the eye  
Life sweeps aside to mask its heart,  
And love, unwilling, acts a lie.

The tear that stamps the acted woe,  
Unacted sorrow wipes away ;  
Pride leans the heart to hollow show,  
And from the truth brings but a play.

## SHAMS

Grief's cries and art-enacted moans  
The play's set hour away that while,  
Life hushes with forced gayer tones,  
And cloaks its sadness with a smile.

Art's vice is bold, we read the part  
With ease enacted as 'tis writ;  
Life's vice is tinseled o'er with art  
'Tis nature plays the hypocrite.

Art mimics life in all its plays,  
In scheme and line, in plot and part;  
Life sits and smiles where Art portrays  
Itself—and straightway mimics Art.

Our lives are lies, as curtains hung,  
Truth sees the sham and slinks away,  
The lies and lines trip from the tongue,  
The artist, Nature, acts a play.

## A TOAST TO MERRIMENT

MAKE merry! Though the day be gray  
Forget the clouds and let's be gay!

How short the days we linger here:  
A birth, a breath, and then—the bier!  
Make merry, you and I, for when  
We part we may not meet again!

What tonic is there in a frown?  
You may go up and I go down,  
Or I go up and you—who knows  
The way that either of us goes?  
Make merry! Here's a laugh, for when  
We part we may not meet again.

Make merry! What of frets and fears?  
There is no happiness in tears.  
You tremble at the cloud and lo!  
'Tis gone—and so 'tis with our woe,  
Full half of it but fancied ills.  
Make merry! 'Tis the gloom that kills.

## A TOAST TO MERRIMENT

Make merry! There is sunshine yet.  
The gloom that promised, let's forget.

The quip and jest are on the wing,  
Why sorrow when we ought to sing?  
Refill the cup of joy, for then  
We part and may not meet again.

A smile, a jest, a joke—alas!  
We come, we wonder, and we pass.

The shadows fall; so long we rest  
In graves, where is no quip or jest.  
Good day! Good cheer! Good-bye! For then  
We part and may not meet again!

## 'A MIDWINTER PASTORAL'

THE frost gleams thick on the window pane,  
The cart wheels creak down the frozen lane;  
High from the chimneys, everywhere  
Rise threads of smoke to the biting air;  
The barn door creaks with a plaintive twinge,  
Where the glistening frost tints the rusted hinge.

The old pump cries—a shivering cry;  
While "Crunch! Crunch! Crunch!" tramp the horses  
by.

The chore boy shivers as he stands  
And beats his sides with his mitten hands;  
While the ice forms thick on the old pump spout,  
As the glistening water gushes out.

There's hoarfrost deep on the great ox yoke,  
And the breath of the oxen comes like smoke;  
The clothes hang stiff on the swaying line,  
And the house dog stands with a piteous whine  
At the closed storm door; and the milk cows wait  
With huddled bulks at the barnyard gate.

## A MIDWINTER PASTORAL

The prying youngster, unafraid,  
Dares tip his tongue to the frosted blade  
Of the axe that lies at the chopping-block ;  
The erstwhile strut of the barnyard cock  
Is only a stiff and stilted round  
As he picks his toes from the frozen ground.

There's snow inch-deep where the cows once browsed,  
There's frost nail-thick on the beasts unhoused.  
The chore boy stamps in the drifted snows  
To coax the warmth to his tingling toes,  
As he drives his fork in the sodden hay,  
And the day is gray in a gloomy way.

There's a "Crunch!" and "Crunch!" as footsteps stalk  
Down the sounding length of the pine board walk.  
The well wheel squeaks with a frosty note  
And the well rope's stiff with an icy coat ;  
The gathered oxen drink their fill  
With updrawn backs, and a shiver chill.

The shed door creaks with a shivering sound,  
As the soapsuds splash on the frozen ground  
Where a pail from the half-bared arms is swung  
Of the kitchen maid, who gives quick tongue  
In a treble "B-r-r-r-h-h!" and a grateful change  
Soon finds at the glow of the kitchen range.

### A MIDWINTER PASTORAL

The chore boy beds his beasts, and then  
Shoos back to its perch a vagrant hen;  
The sodden snow from his feet he knocks  
Ere he piles the depths of the great wood-box  
With snowy sticks; and when 'tis laid  
He steals a kiss from the kitchen maid.

The fields are white and the earth is dead;  
The frost snaps time to the chore boy's tread,  
Stands thick, like snow, on the window pane,  
And the cart wheels creak down the frozen lane.  
While rise from the chimneys everywhere  
Thin threads of smoke on the frosty air.

## A CREED

To be earnest; to be strong;  
To make light the way with song;  
Slow to anger; quick to praise;  
Walking steadfast through the days,  
Firm of purpose, sure of soul,  
Pressing onward to the goal,  
Upright, even, undismayed,  
Sure, serene and unafraid.

To be patient; to be kind;  
To be purposeful, and find  
Sweetness all along the way;  
Loath to judge, but firm to say  
Truth with unrelenting tongue;  
By no cavil veered or swung  
From the right; and to endure  
Hopeful, helpful, clean and pure.

### A CREED

To be gentle ; to forgive ;  
True to life and glad to live ;  
To be watchful and to be  
Rich with boundless charity ;  
To be humble in success,  
Strong of heart in bitterness,  
Tender, gracious, thoughtful, good  
In our man-and-womanhood.

To be smiling, to be glad  
For the yesterdays we've had ;  
To be grateful all the way  
For the beauties of today ;  
To be hopeful and to see  
In the days that are to be,  
Bigger, better, broader things,  
Robes of purple, crowns of kings !

## THE SOUL OF THE DREAMER

ONLY the soul of the dreamer,  
Linked with the heart of a child ;  
Nothing of riches but sweetness,  
Sweetness that spoke when it smiled ;  
Naught of success that is worldly,  
Nothing of riches it had,  
Only the soul of a dreamer,  
That threaded the mists and was glad.

Only the soul of a dreamer,  
That rose from the earth to the sky ;  
Roamed with the clouds and the sunbeams,  
Sang where the swift swallows fly ;  
Lands, it had not, nor the castles,  
Haughtily reared stone by stone ;  
Only the soul of a dreamer  
That prized all the earth as its own.

Only the soul of a dreamer,  
Lifted up out of the mire ;  
Up from the deeps, dense and dismal,  
Into the nobler and higher ;  
Marred not by greed or contention,  
No struggling beast o'er a bone,  
Seeking but sweetness and silence,  
Peace—and its dreamings alone.

## THE SOUL OF THE DREAMER

Only the soul of a dreamer,  
Dreaming of peace and content;  
Love that engulfs every weakness,  
Earth and its bitterness blent,  
Blent with the sweetness of Heaven,  
Only the far-fleeting eyes  
Far-fleeting eyes of the dreamer  
See from the earth—Paradise.

Only the soul of the dreamer,  
Up from the din and the dust;  
Out of the shock of the battle,  
Up from the levels of lust,  
Only the soul of the dreamer,  
Naught of earth's riches it had,  
But it sped with the song and the sunshine  
Into the skies—and was glad.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE NIGHT

SWEETHEART of mine, could I steal back to thee,  
Back through the misted deeps, from Spiritland;  
Or could I wing a whisper, tremblingly.

A message thou couldst hear and understand;  
No words save only these I'd breathe to air,  
Soft as the drowsy summer winds might sigh,  
Light as the nestling roses in thy hair:  
“Sweetheart of mine, I love thee—do not cry.”

Mother of mine, could I look back to thee,  
To see thee sitting silent and alone,  
In the half-light, half-night, and could I see  
Thy tear-wet cheek, and hear the heart-wrung moan;  
Ah, Mother mine, if I could whisper low  
A message from that Otherwhere, to fly  
Upon the wings of Love, the song would blow:  
“Mother of mine, I love thee—do not cry.”

## A MESSAGE FROM THE NIGHT

Father of mine, could I call back to thee,  
Back through the silent mists and sombre shade,  
When thou art cloaked in Grief and Memory,  
Thy heart with mine in the deep darkness laid;  
Could I from the sad silence speak and say  
The words that wake within my heart, to dry  
Those unshed tears, close to thine ears I'd lay  
My lips—"Father, I love thee—do not cry."

Oh, Love of mine, where e'er thou art or how  
Thou wert in lifetime linked unto me,  
Could I from the far distance, on thy brow  
Lay soft a spirit hand and lovingly  
Speak to thee, light as leaf upon the air  
Floats down, or light as sleeping lilies lie  
Upon the eddying waters, thou wouldest share  
My message: "Sweet, I love thee—do not cry."

## JUST HOW IT WAS

“Now, just let me see:  
Seems to me that 'twas she  
Objected to something  
That he did. Or he  
Objected to her having  
Someone to tea.  
No! Now isn't that queer?  
I know I did hear  
Just the way that it was,  
But it's left me, I fear.

“No! It comes to me now:  
It seems this was the how  
Of it: Something he did  
That she wouldn't allow.  
Or it was her old folks  
That started the row?  
No! Now that isn't right,  
I know that's not quite  
The way that Miss Gadaround  
Told me last night.

## JUST HOW IT WAS

“Ah! Now I recall  
The gossip and all:  
It seems that one night  
When he went there to call—  
’Twas last Spring, I think,  
Or was it this Fall?  
Oh, well, anyway  
What I started to say  
Was that—she—well,  
My memory’s awful to-day!

“Now, how did she tell  
Me that? Well, well! Well! Well! !  
You know she got her story  
Right straight from Nell.  
But I can’t quite recall now  
Just what she did tell  
Me last night. Anyway,  
Whichever it may  
Be, the wedding is off,  
As I started to say!”

## SOME TRUTHS IN HOMESPUN

BE wise, and envy not the man  
Attired however spick and span,  
True greatness empty fripperies but scorns ;  
Silk hats may serve alone to dress  
A noddle full of emptiness,  
And patent leathers hide a wealth of corns.

No garments, fine they be, yet can  
Make lady or make gentleman,  
No garb, how poor it be, can ever hide  
The mark of true nobility,  
Nor velvet cloak, but we may see  
The boor, once its rich folds are dropped aside.

No lady yet was made with lace  
Or silk, for Nature leaves a trace  
That every artifice is vain to hide ;  
The lady is, in calico,  
Not less the gentlewoman, though  
She had no mark of gentleness beside.

The practiced-oft deception thin  
By asses in a lion's skin  
In some unthinking bray with ease we read ;  
A vulture, be he decked and dressed  
With plumes from any eagle's crest  
Betrays, in seeking carrion, his breed.

## SOME TRUTHS IN HOMESPUN

Count no man your superior,  
Whatever his exterior,  
Appearance of true worth is not a rule;  
The jester's cap and jingling bell  
Full many a gem of wisdom tell,  
And wisdom's mortarboard may deck a fool.

A king, by right and nature grown,  
Is king without a crown or throne,  
Simplicity but marks his kingliness;  
No crown or throne or signet ring,  
Can make a knave seem more a king,  
The purple only makes him seem the less.

The boor, of any style or ilk,  
Is but the greater boor in silk,  
The garb but marks the more his boorishness;  
No person ever yet that rose  
Above himself by help of clothes,  
The manner makes the man, and not the dress.

## FORSAKEN

HIGH in the tree is an empty nest  
Whence the fledgelings of yesterday are flown;  
Hovers a bird in a vague unrest,  
Wondering, it may be, and all alone.

Wondering, it may be, or East or West  
Or South or North swept the wings untried,  
Wondering over an empty nest  
And the blue of the infinite sky, so wide.

High in the attic 's a trundle bed  
Whence the child of a Yesterday is flown;  
Hovers a woman, with tears unshed,  
Wondering, it may be, and all alone.

Wondering, it may be, or East or West  
Or South or North roams the youth untried,  
Wondering over an empty nest,  
And an empty heart;— and the world so wide!

## THREE VISIONS

### I

A wailing mite of mystery  
That in a cradle cries;  
A bud, Time-opened, where to see  
A soul that sleeping lies;  
A throbbing lump, that wonderingly  
But stares with vacant eyes.

### II

A restless Longing and a Sigh  
That yearns and yearns and yearns;  
A flame, fierce-fed, and flaring high  
That burns and burns and burns;  
A soul, God-given, with a cry,  
Returns, returns, returns.

### III

A shrouded shape that senseless lies  
Soul-silent in the mists;  
That coldly mocks at tears and sighs,  
Nor knows, nor wills, nor lists;  
A senseless thing, with lightless eyes  
And ribbons on its wrists.

## UNMASKED

LIFE is a fruit, and only fair to view,  
Eaten by worms of discontentment through.

Love is a dream, wherein Grief waits beside  
The sleeper—only Sorrow multiplied.

Fame is a crown of roses that adorns  
Unworthy brows, to prick them with its thorns.

Genius a child that knows no cast or creed,  
A flame that wise men shun and fools but feed.

Hope is a scourge that Disappointment wields,  
To drive men on into her thistle fields.

Joy is a sweet illusion, Heaven sent,  
To snatch away and nourish discontent.

Honor a stranger, from the feast shut out  
That men dream of, and poets write about.

Success a throne—a brass and tinsel thing,  
The knave sits on and thinks himself a king.

Conscience, the while a priest, the while a knave,  
The fool makes master and the wise man slave.

Death is the mirror where Sin sees its error,  
Wise men see peace, and only fools see terror.

## IN A LITTLE WHILE

'Tis only for a little while,  
This life, a mingled sob and smile ;  
The heart that throbs so warm today  
Tomorrow ebbs its life away.  
A moment hums life's busy loom,  
Then hushed and silent in the tomb ;  
And yields the sceptre, sob or smile,  
For such a little, little while.

Youth rears in hope a castled pile  
To rise for such a little while ;  
Fate lays in dust its tow'ring walls,  
Ambitious spires and gilded halls ;  
Pride's swelling crest, now plumed high,  
Now stricken low, prays God to die ;  
Time leads the saddened heart to smile  
In such a little, little while.

Life's little candle feebly glows,  
Life's little current quickly flows,  
A moment heaves the troubled breath,  
The candle finds its socket, Death.  
The flushing cheek, the radiant eye,  
Dim, lustreless, and cold shall lie,  
And yet those pallid lips shall smile  
With God in such a little while.

## A MISTAKEN IMPRESSION

SHE was kissing a picture—I saw her, I saw her,  
She sat at her desk and the door was flung wide!  
She was kissing a picture—Oh, horror! Oh, horror!  
Oh, Woman, must faithlessness with thee abide?

She was kissing a picture, I know it, I know it!  
The love light upon it glanced bright from her eyes!  
Oh, Traitor, I'll face thee! Thou'llt show it! Thou'llt  
show it!  
Aye, 'front her I will with the deed! Then she dies!

She was kissing a picture! She hides it! She hides it!  
Down deep in a drawer and she's turning a key.  
Now death and destruction betides it, betides it!  
And woe whom it pictures when he shall face me!

She was kissing a picture! She's going! She's going!  
I'll bide till she's gone and I'll steal it away!  
Oh, jealousy's fury that's glowing, that's glowing  
Within me! Oh, doom that has found me this day!

She was kissing a picture! I'll take it, I'll take it  
And flash in her face this damned image she loves!  
The desk! It is locked! Well, I'll break it, I'll break it  
And find me this card that her faithlessness proves!

She was kissing a picture! I've found it, I've found it!  
(Be quiet my heart and be silent this moan!)  
With letters and flowers around it, around it!  
Why! What!! Well, I'm jiggered!!! The pic-  
ture's my own!

## NOT AGAIN

FAITH comes the once and not again,  
And confidence ; the heart is vain  
To nurse to life the trust once slain.

Honor comes once and not again,  
Sin spotted now, all Time is vain  
To cleanse and wipe away the stain.

Love comes the once and not again,  
Wound-wounded now, the heart is vain  
To heal the scar or dull the pain.

Pure hearts come once and not again,  
Tears, sighs, regrets, to cleanse are vain  
The soul that in the slime has lain.

All flawless jewels, lightly tossed  
Aside, yet, ah, the bitter cost  
Of tears once any jewel lost!

## WHEN SARAH PLAYS

Now Sarah sits at eventide,  
When day its glory sees  
In twilight, and her fingers glide  
Like fairies o'er the keys.  
The old piano's mellow notes,  
Like voices, through the haze,  
Speak to me, and a vision floats  
Before me as she plays.

The keys are yellowed with the years,  
Yet rise and fall like leaves ;  
The tones are mellowed as the tears  
That flow on as she weaves  
With fingers deft and fanciful,  
Her wreaths of melodies,  
And all the harsher notes are still  
The while she tempts the keys.

The sweet, half-silent sounds, alone  
Shut out the din of day ;  
The sting of sorrow's pain has flown,  
Its pleasures only stay ;  
The misted eye roves down the years,  
Their every gladness sees ;  
Not sweeter than the joys of tears  
Her fairy melodies.

## WHEN SARAH PLAYS

Light as the rustling wind that strays  
Where floats the falling leaf,  
The treble shrill of joy she plays  
And the deep bass of grief;  
Half shadowed, in the dying light,  
A witch's spell she lays  
Upon my heart, its subtle might  
To bind me as she plays.

Now odors sweet and fanciful  
Are wafted on the air,  
And flowers withered long and dull  
A fresher fragrance bear;  
A deeper, denser, perfume clings,  
The memories of the days  
Departed now, and gladness brings  
Me glories as she plays.

A very witchery of peace,  
Lulls every sigh to sleep;  
The yearnings die, the longings cease,  
While Rest descends, a deep  
And velvet cloak; then silently  
Sweet Comfort comes and lays  
Her velvet cheek and kisses me  
The while that Sarah plays.

## A GENEALOGICAL HOMILY

You may believe 'tis true that your coursing blood is  
blue,

But science stern assures us that all healthy blood  
is red;

And the longest pedigree that grows on a family tree  
Isn't half as beneficial as a good, long head.

You may refer with pride to your ancestors, beside  
Whose fame your light is dim, for letters, art, or  
pelf,

But I trust you will believe it is nobler to achieve  
Enough that you may be some time an ancestor  
yourself.

The watch dog well who serves and who carefully  
observes

The strangers who approach and wakes the family  
with his bark,

Tho' he had no pedigree is a better dog for me  
Than the dog that sleeps, e'en tho' his ancestors were  
in the Ark.

It is right that you admire, and admiring, you aspire  
To trace a noble pathway in your genealogy,  
But permit me to assure that no person, rich or poor,  
Ever plucked a plum of greatness off the grandest  
family tree.

## A GENEALOGICAL HOMILY

The man who is a king, duke, or lord, or anything

That's noble, tho' his ancestors were cobblers at the  
last,

Has a much more honored way in this little world  
today

Than the cobbler whose ancestors governed king-  
doms in the past.

And full many a man today, to whom honor we might  
pay,

Has been overcome in living up to a proud ancestry ;  
And full many a man been laid in an everlasting shade  
By the branches of a towering, spreading, ancient  
family tree.

So don't take it much to heart when a man takes you  
apart

And tells you he was bred 'mid aristocracy's en-  
virons ;

Tho' his ancestors came o'er in the Mayflower to this  
shore,

The log book, still, may show that every one came  
o'er in irons.

## SMILES TODAY

FATE, would thou wert a flower lass,  
Bright-eyed, red cheeked, and as we pass  
With heavy hearts, would thou mightst cry  
Thy wares of smiles and we might buy:

“Smiles today! Smiles today!  
Smi-i-les! Swe-ee-eet smi-i-les to coax away  
Thy cares! Light hearts! This way! This way!  
Oh who will buy my smiles today!”

Ah, more than busy wouldest thou stand  
To deal them out with lavish hand,  
Could every sad heart hear thy cry  
And of thy wares might choose and buy:

“Smiles today! Smiles today!  
Smiles! Swee-eet smi-i-les to lure away  
The sting of sorrow! Hearts made gay!  
Oh who will buy my smiles today!”

## POOR JIM

IN a New England commonwealth, while knocking  
'round for strength and health,  
I boarded with a widow dame (of course I can't dis-  
close her name),  
An acid creature, gaunt and grim, who lived alone with  
one son, Jim.  
A freckled, awkward, red-haired chap, not reared ex-  
actly in the lap  
Of luxury, or taught to know affection's honeyed  
overflow.  
And oft my rose-hued fancy's dreams were rudely  
shattered by the screams  
Wild from the wood-shed forth which came. And then  
my stern, ascetic dame,  
Smoothing the wrinkles from her lap and waving high  
a leathern strap,  
Emerged, and said in accents grim: "Feel better now,  
I've paddled Jim."

Day in, day out, that same assault, whate'er the wrong  
or whose the fault.  
If any boarder sought by night to liquidate his debt  
in flight,  
My acid widow from her grief in flogging Jim found  
swift relief.  
Whene'er in anger, 'twas her wont to strap that awk-  
ward little runt.

## POOR JIM

The beef was tough, the bread was burned—at once  
my lady quickly turned,  
Until she spied the trembling Jim ; her claw-like fingers  
gobbled him,  
Swift to the wood-shed bore him out, aloft she swung  
her leathern knout,  
And then emerged, tall, sour, and grim : “Feel better  
now, I’ve paddled Jim.”

Poor Jim, a child of sores and salve, served as a con-  
stant safety valve.  
Perhaps my lady angered came from quarrel with some  
neighbor dame ;  
Or worsted in some church debate ; arose, perchance,  
a little late ;  
The butcher’s bill was deemed too large ; the grocer’s  
trifling overcharge  
Conspired to rouse my lady’s ire ; her lips were drawn  
her eyes flashed fire ;  
Straightway the luckless Jim was sought, the strap  
from out the kitchen brought,  
Jim laid across his mother’s lap ; shrill whistled then  
the leathern strap.  
Until she breathed in accents grim : “Feel better now,  
I’ve paddled Jim.”

## POOR JIM

But once my lady's accents shrill were silenced; she  
was stricken ill.

Her lungs distressed, she strove for breath, and hov-  
ered between life and death.

The doctors pondered in dismay; they held no hope  
and saw no way

To save my lady's life. More grim and gaunt she grew,  
and little Jim

Was called to say his last good-bye. She spied him  
with a brighter eye,

Swift seized him, drew him 'cross her lap, and called  
the nurse to bring the strap.

At eve the doctor, calling 'round, miraculous improve-  
ment found.

"I feel," she whispered low to him, "much better since  
I paddled Jim."

## WINTER

GRIEVE ye not. The flowers are not dead,  
Their beauty fades but for a little while.  
Grieve ye not. The leafless branches spread,  
The Mother, Spring, shall waken with her smile.

Grieve ye not. Tho' still the fettered lake,  
Ice-locked and silent, voiceless, cold, and gray,  
The Spring again its melody shall wake,  
And all its waves shall whisper to the day.

---

Grieve ye not. If from the sea and sky  
From earth the air a whisper wings to thee,  
And tells thee thou asleep in Death shalt lie,  
Spring smiles and teaches thee Eternity.

## IF WE HAD THOUGHT

If we had thought,  
How much of good  
We might have done.  
What we have rued  
Of haste or pride  
Or anger wrought,  
Might not have been  
If we had thought.

The hasty word,  
That hurt a heart,  
The pride that made  
The hot tears start,  
The taunt that stung,  
The anger hot  
Might have been spared  
If we had thought.

If we had thought  
How much of grief  
We might have eased.  
What sweet relief  
To aching hearts  
We might have brought  
In sympathy  
If we had thought.

## IF WE HAD THOUGHT

If we had thought  
Some means each day  
We might have found  
To smooth the way  
Of some tried soul,  
Some desert spot  
We might have cheered  
If we had thought.

And yet one deed  
In kindness done,  
More glory brings,  
More fame has won,  
That countless good  
We would have wrought  
To all the world  
If we had thought.

## BALLAD OF THE RAIN

PUDDLES and pools in the village street,  
Dripping eaves, where the swallows hide;  
The splash and splash of horses' feet  
Down the muddy lane, and the trees beside,  
Sodden and soaked till the raindrops fall,  
Like tears, and the twigs with jewels set  
Of limpid water, and over all  
A haze of mist, like a cloak all wet.

Under the boughs of the great oak tree  
The glistening bulks of the huddled kine,  
Driven from the pasture and rhythmically  
Munching their cuds, and their broad backs shine,  
Drenched and matted with pelting rain.  
Plaintively sounding a lowing wail;  
A passing team in a muddy lane  
And a muffled and melancholy hail.

Blinding sheets of the driven rain;  
Mist over hollow and plain and hill;  
Splashing drops on the misted pane  
That trickle down to the window sill;  
Beaten fowls with their ruffled crests,  
Crowding close to the sheltering wall;  
Dripping orchards and sodden nests,  
With mist like a wet cloak over all.

## BALLAD OF THE RAIN

The herdsman lowers his broad hat brim  
To a sheltering slant, and the raindrops fall  
From the beaded edge of the lowered rim  
To the oilskin coat that envelopes all  
His length; the guiding collie stops  
From gathering in the grazing flocks  
To shake from his sides the glistening drops  
That mat the mass of his silken locks.

The eave spout gushes its frothy streams,  
Whence the rain barrel fills and overflows  
Its sides, and the slate roof blacker gleams  
Through the murk and mist; the housewife goes  
From room to room lest the windows be  
Unshut, and peers through the sodden pall  
Without, and the rain beats endlessly,  
With mist like a wet cloak over all.

Sullen and sodden and soaked and splashed  
With pelting drops lies the distant field;  
The roads lie heavy, and wet steeds, dashed  
With mud, where a carriage, muddy-wheeled,  
Rolls down the road, and the drear day long  
The weeping clouds no comfort hold.  
The pelting rain dins a sullen song  
And the day is gloomy, gray, and cold.

## NOT DEAD

THE vase is broken,  
The flower is dead,  
Its petals crumbled,  
Its ashes spread.

Sweeps its ruins  
The wandering gust,  
The leaf to ashes  
The stalk to dust.

Claims its ashes  
The waiting sod,  
But something lingers  
That came from God—

The soul of the flower  
That lives for aye,  
The scented memory  
That cannot die.

The vase is broken  
The life is dead.  
The cold clay crumbles  
In ashes spread.

## NOT DEAD

The castle totters,  
With earth is blent  
The offcast mantle  
And tenement.

Claims its ashes  
The waiting sod,  
But something lingers  
That came from God.

The something voiceless,  
Shapeless, vast,  
The sweeter perfume  
That lives at last.

In dust the flower,  
The life is fled,  
But something lingers  
And is not dead.

## THE LOVABLE LASS OF THE GROUCHY OLD MAN

A GROUCHY and crotchety, fussy old man,  
Whose stick on the walk beats a rat-a-tat-tat,  
The cut of his coat on an old-fashioned plan,  
A shiny red nose and a worn beaver hat.  
A blare of defiance, he trumpets his nose,  
He clears his hoarse throat with a he-he-he-hem!  
But the girl on his arm, she's as fair as a rose,  
How grew such a flower on such a gnarled stem?

He bushes his eyebrows and scowls upon me,  
His stick with a click beats the walk as we pass,  
His scowl wastes the bloom of a smile that I see  
And freezes it stiff on the lips of the lass.  
He raises his hat with a Chesterfield air,  
The sweep of his arm is chill courtesy's sign;  
But his eyes pass me by with an unseeing stare.  
If blood were for spilling, he'd dabble in mine.

## THE LOVABLE LASS OF THE GROUCHY OLD MAN

There's pride in the white crest, uplifted so high,  
Defiant the tilt of the old beaver hat.  
Contempt in the stare of the unknowing eye,  
And the click of his stick with its rat-a-tat-tat.  
He spurns me, he scorns me, he hates me,—he knows  
I'm nursing in secret some pilfering plan  
To pluck from its parental arbor the rose  
That rests on the arm of this fussy old man.

So he passes me by with an unseeing stare,  
His cane beats defiantly rat-a-tat-tat.  
He trumpets his nose with a furious blare,  
There's pride in the tilt of his worn beaver hat.  
Love may laugh at locksmiths, nor hazard a care  
In bridging most gulfs of despair with a span,  
But Love needs more courage than mine has, I swear,  
To laugh at this crotchety, fussy old man.

## LIFE, LOVE AND DEATH

LIVING and loving and dying,  
Life is complete in the three.  
Smiling or sobbing or sighing,  
Which is for you or for me?  
Hoping and struggling and striving,  
Dreaming success by and by;  
But whether we're driven or driving,  
We live and we love and we die.

'Aiming and hitting and missing,  
Life is complete in the three.  
The fickle world praising or hissing,  
Which is for you or for me?  
Striding or limping or creeping,  
Time drives us heartlessly by;  
Meeting and parting and weeping,  
We live and we love and we die.

## LIFE, LOVE AND DEATH

Yearning, rejoicing, and mourning,  
Life is complete in the three.  
Sackcloth or garland adorning,  
Which is for you or for me?  
The web of our little day, stretched,  
Meshes a sob or a sigh;  
Joyful or joyless or wretched,  
We live and we love and we die.

Wishing and fearing and fretting,  
Life is complete in the three.  
The world's remembrance or forgetting,  
Which is for you or for me?  
Gnarled and knotted and tangled  
The skeins of our little lives lie;  
Mud-splattered or jewel-bespangled,  
We live and we love and we die.

## A VISION OF THE LITTLE COUNTRY TOWN

He sits there at the fireside, where the mellow light is gleaming  
O'er the columns of the little country paper that he holds,  
And something he has read there seems to set his fancy dreaming,  
While memory's panorama of forgotten days unfolds.  
Its quaint and homely phrases all incline him to reflection;  
Some sweetness of enchantment as he lays the paper down  
Strips the bitter peel of sorrow from the fruit of recollection,  
He tastes the mellow sweetness of the little country town.

He sees, at even, a cottage where the lamplight's dimly straying  
Through the window, thickly bowered with the honeysuckle vine;  
To his ears come strains of music—there's a sound of someone playing  
On a little cottage organ and the notes of Auld Lang Syne.

## A VISION OF THE LITTLE COUNTRY TOWN

He hears the tea things clatter, sees a woman's figure  
flitting

Here and there, belike some fairy, and the shimmer  
of her gown;

And longing leads his fancy to the place where he is  
sitting

Just across from her at table in the little country town.

What spell lies on its columns? There rise lusty tones  
and laughing,

A rioting of young folks through the open parlor  
door,

The place resounds with revelry and badinage and  
chaffing;

Someone has brought his fiddle from the little coun-  
try store.

The merry songs from lad and lass in lusty tones are  
swelling,

The sparkling cider passes in the earthen jug and  
brown;

What silver-throated eloquence of memory is telling  
The story of the glory of the little country town?

Yet he sits here alone, where all the dreamy shadows  
dancing,

And silent, save for voices that his memory may  
hear;

The eyes that o'er the columns of the little paper  
glancing,

Like violets, dew-misted, in the passing of a tear.

## A VISION OF THE LITTLE COUNTRY TOWN

For some, as he, are missing from the circle once unbroken,  
And one he knows lies sleeping where the autumn leaves are brown;  
His hair is white, like silver, yet in fancy he has spoken  
With all those lads and lasses of the little country town.

The misty eye of sorrow at the bush of dreams is seeking  
The rose of recollection with the fragrance of its morn,  
And in the ear of memory the voice of grief is speaking—  
The hand that plucks the blossom knows the sharpness of the thorn.  
His dreams die with the embers at the fireplace—ah, the pity!  
The paper falls from listless hands and idly flutters down.  
How lonely, lonely, lonely is the sullen, smoky city,  
When the heart has come from straying in the little country town!

## A HUMAN LIFE

A SHIP that throbs along in dire distress  
Till lost in oceans of forgetfulness.  
A tangle of sweet flowers whose petals turn  
To ash of unfulfillment in an urn.

A wisp of tangled threads, whose parted ends  
No deft hand joins, no endless effort mends.  
A play whose fickle players merely greet  
And go and leave the story incomplete.

A bud that opens brilliant at the dawn,  
Flings sweet perfume a moment and is gone.  
A breath between a cradle and a bier,  
The blending of a smile, a sob, a tear.

A book whose pages turn with each new day,  
Till Time has read the tale and cast away.  
A mask worn till a passing play is done,  
To cloak a wraith and hide a skeleton.

## A HUMAN LIFE

A lie, whose ghostly semblance is concealed  
Till in a shroud its untruth lies revealed.  
A thing that shapes the sod for a brief day  
And dies and leaves its faithful slave more clay.

A story that is told ere 'tis begun,  
A song that only whispers and is done;  
A thing that chains the lightnings and that stirs  
The deep—the elements its messengers.

Lord of the sea and sky, a ruler proud  
That quakes at storms and trembles at a cloud;  
That comes and goes on wings unseen—a germ  
That grows to fill a grave and feed a worm.

## FROM THE COURT RECORDS

YOUNG Silas Watkins stole a ham—a theft most reprehensible,

And then engaged a counselor (which certainly was sensible).

They plunged him in a dungeon deep, a dungeon grim and terrorfule,

The while his lawyer went to court upon a mission errorful.

And when he found at once the whole proceeding could be “busted,” he

Sued out a habeas corpus and took Silas out of custody.

In court his learned counsel urged with dignified suavity

The dangers of unseemly haste in matters of such gravity.

The prosecution’s bitterness he held unjustifiable,  
“ ‘Tis Justice, with her blinded eyes, before whom we are triable!”

And after hours of argument, with growing heat and frictional,

He took a change of venue on a question jurisdictional.

Whereat the counsel got a stay of trial for a year or two,

To find a missing witness (who was dead, I have a fear or two).

## FROM THE COURT RECORDS

The years rolled on, they tried him, and unmercifully depicted him

The commonest of larcenists; the jury then convicted him.

"No chance for Silas!" cried his lawyer. "Yes, I say, indeed he has!"

Upon the which he went to court and got a supersedeas.

"Good cheer!" said he to Silas. "You will soon be on your feet again."

While Silas gave a bail bond and was straightway on the street again.

A monstrous abstract then they filed, the lawyer made a noise and fuss,

Until, within a year or two, the court gave them a syllabus,

Which, stripped of all its verbiage and law and technicality,

But reaffirmed the verdict based on Silas' proved rascality.

"Odds blood!" cried Silas' counsel to his client, "When I've read you this,

You'll see the entire finding simply reeks with flaws and prejudice.

To jail shall any citizen for stealing of a hock be sent?"

Straightway the which he went to court and filed another document.

FROM THE COURT RECORDS

"No sheriff shall arrest him, sir, on any legal sham as  
grim  
As this, and if a sheriff tries, I'll certainly mandamus  
him!"

Again upon the solemn court, with masterful urbanity,  
He urged a close inquiry by an expert on insanity,  
Who felt the bumps on Silas' head, who found pro-  
found rascality,  
Who in a year made his report of "obvious normality."  
Long Silas' counsel studied it, by methods not re-  
vealable,  
And finally concluded the decision was appealable.

Good Silas gave another bond to stay his jail proces-  
sional;  
Good Silas' counsel labored with an ardor quite pro-  
fessional,  
Until he got an order from the highest court avail-  
able,  
"(That as the statutes read, there was a question if  
'twas jailable,) The court below should try again, and though they  
might acquit it, or  
Convict it, they must try again"—so stated the re-  
mittitur!

The witnesses, those gray old men, recalled the ancient  
history  
Of Silas' crime with halting speech, and deep and dark  
the mystery

FROM THE COURT RECORDS

To them of why they were recalled; with quavering  
tones, in truthfulness

They told again the old, old tale of Silas' erring youth-  
fulness.

The jurors held he could not change his spots, but like  
the leopard he;

So Silas' counsel straightway held he had been twice  
in jeopardy.

Alas! So intricate a case, with all the points involv-  
able!

When Death took Silas and to dust found him to be  
resolvable.

Took him for reasons, good, perhaps, but which were  
not revealable,

And Silas' counsel found, alack, the judgment not  
appealable!

But back to court he strode when sure that Charon  
o'er had ferried him,

And cried: "I want a nol. pros. for my client—we  
have buried him!"

## WE FORGET

We lift Grief's brimming beaker up,  
We drain the deep dregs from the cup,  
And while our lips with gall still wet  
We vow remembrance—and forget.

We drink of Pleasure's nectar sweet,  
We tread her clouds with wingèd feet,  
And while the tingling pulses yet  
Throb to her music—we forget.

A faith we pledge, a vow we plight,  
Ah me! How more than featherlight  
Our pledges weight our souls—ere yet  
The echoes falter—we forget.

We leash the beast ingratitude  
In better while, in greater mood,  
And ere the chain grows taut, we let  
The leash to slip—and we forget.

## WE FORGET

We drink to Love, all protestful  
A pledge from out the grinning skull  
Of long dead Constancy—ere yet  
The chalice empty—we forget.

We vow in frail and failing mood  
Remembrance sweet and gratitude,  
Until the burden of the debt  
Chafes our light souls—and we forget.

Today bestrewn the troubled way  
With fears, as saints we kneel to pray;  
The way tomorrow unbeset,  
Self proud we rise—and we forget.

## THE CYNIC'S FRIENDS

FRIENDS are but bubbles in a bowl  
Mere empty things, devoid of soul,  
Reflecting but what shines upon;  
A puff of wind and—pish! They're gone.

Now see! So carefully I've wrought  
To raise and fashion one from naught.  
A passing gust! A zephyr veers!  
My bubble bursts and disappears.

I sit and gaze at one I've made  
Reflecting gems of light and shade,  
When, lo, it bursts! The friendship flies  
And leaves but soap dust in my eyes.

So thick they cluster, bright they shine,  
So delicate, clear-hued, and fine,  
So fair, so fine—to look upon,  
But brush so lightly—puff! They're gone!

## MYSTERIES

(From the Persian.)

A LITTLE span of breath spun like a thread  
Across a fearsome chasm, yawning wide  
Between a birth and bier, its swaying length  
Clung to in fear by myriads of souls  
All struggling on, from out the gloom to gloom.

A thread of breath forth floating through the air  
Bearing a soul from birth mysterious  
To death unfathomable in the dark,  
And shrinking souls that clasp and cling in fear  
Dreading the abysmal darkness down beneath.

A soul, fearing to die, that dreads to live,  
Swaying in agony 'twixt cliff and cliff,  
Above a soundless void, and toiling on,  
Faint breathing, lest the thread of breath may snap,  
Praying that death may end its fear to die.

A web of endless threads across a sea  
Whose moaning waters, rushing far below,  
Flow uninterpreted; and in the web  
Confused souls, inborn to life unwilled  
Are caught and only breathe and wonder why.

## MYSTERIES

A sea that sobs, the sea of rayless gloom,  
To which they cry, but only great gulls rise  
From Death's own cote, to fright them in the dark,  
And answer rises not but from the depths  
Comes only silence, dread and mystery.

No sound but threads of breath, that strain and snap,  
Plunging their burdens down into the depths,  
Where blackness yawns and swallows up the life  
That clung to its spent thread in dismal fright,  
Knowing to be afraid; afraid to know.

A quaking mystery that treads a thread  
With steps unsteady, knows nor whence nor where  
Nor why, nor anything, but that its span  
Soon ends, and it must topple in the gloom  
Dread, dense and deep—and this is Life and Death.

## CONTENT

GIVE me content; all else is vain,  
Nor power nor majesty may gain  
The prize, and yet in me are blent  
All these, the while I am content.

Give me content, nor anything  
Beside, uncrowned I were a king  
With this; and majesty its throne  
Might forfeit, gained it this alone.

Give me content, nor any sigh  
For things the which beyond me lie,  
And mine a heritage that gold  
Were dross beside, and honor cold.

Give me content—power or degree,  
Fame, honor, genius, majesty,  
Keep thou all these, for these all blent  
Thou givest, when I have content.

## THE PARTED THREADS

IF he came back, I wonder would he know  
The voices whispering of the long ago?  
If he came back, I wonder would he see  
The beauties, buried now, that used to be?  
If he came back, back from the dust and dead,  
I wonder would he seek the broken thread,  
And follow on, o'er sod and o'er the sea,  
Until it led him back to youth and me?

If he came back, I wonder would he share  
My dreams? Or would the roses in my hair  
Be but dull, voiceless flowers of the spring,  
Speechless and silent, mute, nor whispering  
The secrets once they told? Or would they glow  
With the sweet memories of long ago,  
Where every petal quivered with the weight  
And grandeur of a rapture passionate?

## THE PARTED THREADS

If he came back, I wonder would he feel  
The rapture of the hopes that used to steal  
From out the tinted twilight as we stood  
Beneath the boughs in the thick, leafy wood,  
Thrilled with the song whose silent melody  
None heard in all its ecstasy but we?  
Would he now hear that whispered song and low  
If he came back, who went so long ago?

Where ends the song that is yet half unsung?  
In the still mound, where the green turf upflung?  
Dies all the music, or but hid in air,  
Trembling, yet mute, in that vast Otherwhere?  
The threads now parted, who shall mend again,  
Weld broken links, restore the chain? And then  
When they come back who have been gone so long,  
I wonder will they know the old, sweet song?

## WINTER AND SUMMER

Snow on the hilltops, drear and bleak,  
Snow in the vales where the shrill winds speak  
In mournful tones; but deep, and deep  
Down, down, beneath, the flowers sleep.

Green are the hilltops, fresh and fair,  
Sweet is the breath of the scented air,  
Loosed the chains of the ice-locked lake,  
And the sad heart smiles and the flowers wake.

Snow on the heart that is riven and bleak,  
Snow on the heart where voices speak,  
Voices of grief that is deep and deep,  
Yet still in the heart the flowers sleep.

A whisper of hope on the scented air,  
Flown is the snow and the bleak heart fair;  
Dull Grief's grim fetters break and break,  
And the sad heart smiles and the flowers wake.

## RESIGNATION

A BROKEN mother to the Buddha brought  
A lifeless child; with hands outstretched besought  
That mighty prophet to recall the breath  
Forthflown, and steal away the sting of death.  
Tearful she pleaded and with piteous gaze;  
The Buddha stooped, from her bent knees to raise  
The stricken mother; took from her the child  
And spake in gentle accents, soothing, mild,  
That hushed her grief and checked the flooding tears;  
"Be still thine heart, and quieted thy fears;  
Thy child shall be restored again to thee  
When thou hast sought and found and brought to me  
A grain of corn, from hovel, hut or home,  
(No limits give I in thy quest to roam,)  
Whence Death has stolen parent not, or child."  
Eager she heard, and her distress beguiled,  
Lighted her eyes, the Buddha's name she blessed  
And turned and sped fleet-footed on her quest.

## RESIGNATION

Sped on the years and yet she sought in vain,  
With eager voice inquired and sought again.  
But here a parent gone and here a son,  
And here a daughter, always finding one  
Forever absent; still, with footsteps fleet  
She sped, to find some circle quite complete.  
Asked at each door with mutely pleading eyes  
And hungry yearning for the ordered prize;  
Despairing not till worn with toil and time,  
With patience tireless and with hope sublime,  
Again the Buddha in her anguish seeks,  
Recounts her journeys and her failure speaks.

The Buddha softly, sadly speaks again:  
"Hast thou not learned thy search would not be vain  
Were there the power thou wouldest have me declare?  
Dost thou not see that Death is everywhere  
But in that circle of Eternity  
That comes with only waiting patiently?"

## THE RECRUIT

The trumpet calls, the twilight falls,  
Goodbye, sweetheart.

A dream of bliss, a hurried kiss,  
Goodbye, sweetheart.

A stout ship, throbbing, speeds away,  
A crimson sunset streaks the day,  
A weeping maiden kneels to pray,  
Goodbye, sweetheart.

The trumpet calls, a soldier falls,  
Goodbye, sweetheart.

A gasping cry in agony,  
Goodbye, sweetheart.

A form, blood-reddened, silent lies,  
Where crimson streaks the earth and skies,  
Upturned two sightless, staring eyes,  
Goodbye, sweetheart.

## SONG OF ENDEAVOR

'Tis not by wishing that we gain the prize,  
    Nor yet by ruing,  
But, from our fallings, learning how to rise,  
    And tireless doing.

The idols broken, nor our tears and sighs  
    May yet restore them.  
Regret is only food for fools ; the wise  
    Look but before them.

Nor ever yet Success was wooed with tears ;  
    To notes of gladness  
Alone the fickle goddess turns her ears,  
    She hears not sadness.

The heart thrives not in the dull rain and mist  
    Of gloomy pining.  
The sweetest flowers are the flowers sun-kissed,  
    Where glad light shining.

## SONG OF ENDEAVOR

Look not behind thee ; there is only dust  
And vain regretting.

The lost tide ebbs ; in the next flood thou must  
Learn, by forgetting.

For the lost chances be ye not distressed  
To endless weeping ;

Be not the thrush that o'er the empty nest  
Is vigil keeping.

But in new efforts our regrets today  
To stillness whiling,

Let us in some pure purpose find the way  
To future smiling.

## RAINBOWS

WE sit and dream.  
Our airy fancies wing an endless flight  
To that dim future time when wrong's made right;  
When life's all gilded with the glorious light  
Of happiness, and in the shadowy night,  
We see glad visions that thrill us and seem  
So close we almost touch them, but the gleam  
Fades—and we sit and dream.

We sit and dream.  
And paint hope's pictures on the melting air;  
We see the distant city where we share  
The joys we've been denied, and smiling there  
The fleeting promises we seek, alluring, fair,  
They beckon us, we hasten on, and seem  
Almost to touch them, but the hopes that gleam  
Fade—and we sit and dream.

## RAINBOWS

We sit and dream.

We build fool's castles from the twigs of hope;  
Then through the darknesses and mists we grope,  
And on and on and on, and finding not  
The palaces we've dreamed. The little lot  
Of Man is but to struggle on, to seem  
Almost to grasp the prize; its luring gleam  
Fades—and we sit and dream.

We sit and dream.

We know we dream and know we dream in vain,  
And yet we strive and struggle on, through pain,  
Through joy and grief, as through the mist and rain  
A wayworn traveler plods, seeking a light  
That bids him hope of haven in the night.  
We drag our weary feet along and seem  
Almost to reach the beacon, but the gleam  
Fades—and we sit and dream.

## TAPS

LIGHTS out! and darkness brooding deep around  
Thee, soldier; not the trembling bugle's sound  
Nor volley thrice repeated o'er the mound

Shall waken thee.

Lights out! Not where the flag of battle flies,  
Nor here, where the sad, silent shadow lies,  
Shall drumbeat call or bugle bid thee rise,

But silently,

Thy duty done, thou sleepest. Rest thee well;  
Nor any rude alarm shall strike and swell  
To rouse thee—Glory stands thy sentinel.

Good night to thee!

## AN OLD-FASHIONED GIRL

Just an old-fashioned girl, of the kind that you knew  
When your mother sat up to mend stockings for you  
With a ball of red yarn and a bag full of hose  
And a goose-eggish thing that slipped down in the  
toes.

Just an old-fashioned girl, of the kind that brings tears  
To your eyes when you think of the toil of her years,  
And wonder how ever she laid every curl  
On a half-dozen heads—such an old-fashioned girl.

Just an old-fashioned girl, of an age ere the flat,  
Or of winters in this place and summers in that.  
Of the kind that you knew when you went with bare  
legs

In the days when you ransacked the manger for eggs.  
Just an old-fashioned girl in a blue gingham gown  
That is leading your fancy some forty years down  
On the pathway of years, till the hum and the whirl  
Of the day you forgot with that old-fashioned girl.

## AN OLD-FASHIONED GIRL

Just an old-fashioned girl of that out-of-date day,  
When you knew all the hymns and she found time to  
    play  
On the organ in church, and you knelt with her there  
And repeated—what was it?—ah, yes!—’twas a  
    prayer:  
Such an old-fashioned thing, as you think of it now  
With the years writ in wrinkles on temple and brow;  
But the years back there gleam with the luster of  
    pearl—  
When you walked hand-in-hand with that old-fash-  
    ioned girl.

Just an old-fashioned girl of those old-fashioned days,  
And she knelt in the night with a prayer that she’d  
    raise  
Up a son to be manly and honest and true.  
There’s a mound where the wild-flowers nodded and  
    grew  
Ere the world bade you come, and a love that lies  
    there  
With its heart in the dust, but its essence as rare  
As the breath of the rose and as pure as the pearl  
That shall tinge all your dreams of that old-fashioned  
    girl.

## WHERE?

“WHERE lies the town of Happiness?”

Cried the youth to the wrinkled sage,  
As they met one day on the weary way  
That lies 'twixt Youth and Age.

The gray haired wise man shook his head:  
“'Tis a little farther on,” he said.

“Where lies the town of Happiness?

I pray we reach it soon;”  
For risen high in the molten sky  
Was the sun that marked Life's noon.  
But again the wise man shook his head:  
“'Tis a little farther on,” he said.

“Where lies the town of Happiness?”

The youth was old and gray,  
With shoulders bent, and eyes intent  
Where the road stretched forth, away  
The wise man sadly shook his head:  
“'Tis a little farther on,” he said.

“Where lies the town of Happiness?”

Down, down in the dust he fell;  
His voice was shrill and the death films fill  
His eyes: Mused the sage: “'Tis well.”  
And there gleamed in his eye a tear unshed:  
“For me, 'tis farther on,” he said.

## THE JUDGMENT

THE world and what is of the world shall fade  
And in the dust and embers, dead, be laid.  
Ambition, fame, degree and love and lust  
Shall totter, fall and crumble in the dust.  
The stars die and the radiant sun grow cold,  
And gloom and shroud the universe shall hold.  
The lover's lute, the brazen trump, the lyre  
Be cast upon a common funeral pyre.  
The sighs of toiling millions shall be stilled  
Nor space nor time with struggling being thrilled.  
But emptiness in gloom, and space shall hold  
But space and nothingness shall space enfold.  
And Silence, sombre, still, shall sit and brood  
Upon his vast dominion—Solitude.  
Time stand beside the yawning pit and grave  
Of things and ponder what is good to save  
From all the ash and wreck of worlds, and pause,  
Adjust the balances and read the laws.  
Weigh wealth and honor, fame, degree and pride  
But with a frown to cast them all aside.  
And raise his voice and in the solitude  
Shall cry: "Oh God, is there no perfect Good?"  
Space all unfathomed echo with the cry  
And Silence shall still brood, but not reply.  
And Time shall cry again: "Whom shall I save  
From out this depth of ash and wreck and grave?"  
Lo! A voice whispers in the solitude:  
"Save all in whom thou findest any good!"  
Time speaks once more betime the task is done:  
"Lord thou hast bidden me save everyone!"

## AT THE WAR OFFICE

A woman poor and a peeress proud,  
A dingy room and a crushing crowd,  
The gloom of death and grave and shroud,  
A stifled cry and a sob, aloud.

A heart has heard and an eye has read;  
A soul has writhed, and a lowered head  
Is bowed, and a trembling tongue has said:  
“My God! My God! And he is dead!”

A wail, a sob, and a bitter cry;  
An anguished tear in a woman’s eye;  
A peeress’ face where agony  
Is carved, and a mutely murmured “Why?”

A woman stares and a peeress starts.  
Without, the din of traffic’s marts  
Throbs in the streets. Lie far apart  
Their lives; but close, so close their hearts.

## THE LAST APPEAL

FOR her sake I will woo thee,  
Oh, Fortune, and sue thee

For peace; I will bow thee my arrogant pride.  
For her sake I will bend thee  
My head, and will lend thee  
My struggles again what thy caprice betide.

Think not that I fear thee!  
Myself, I would jeer thee

And bid thee defiance to do what it please  
Thee to do; but to render  
To her what the tender  
Heart's love of me bids, I will crook thee my knees.

I come not to woo thee  
For fame, or to sue thee,

But only as pleader for her when I see  
Her so crushed in her spirit;  
Ah, Jade—thou must hear it,  
The prayer that goes from me to heaven—and thee.

## THE LAST APPEAL

Think not I am pleading  
For self; were I bleeding  
And battered thy minions should still taste my  
sword;  
But, ah! 'Tis not human  
To withhold from woman  
The little she craves, when by woman adored.

Not wealth beyond measure,  
Not gold of thy treasure,  
But, ah! just enough of thy goodness to lay  
Before her, and reaping  
My joy in her weeping  
Of pride in my conquest find comfort today.

So for her sake I woo thee,  
Again I will sue thee,  
For her sake I come and I fawn like a cur  
Begging food; but remember  
My last ashing ember  
Shall hate thee—but still I will woo thee—for her!

## CONTENTMENT

LIVE in Today, nor count the Future's sorrow;  
Live in Today, nor dream the Future's pain;  
Live in Today, there may be no Tomorrow.  
Today's delights thou mayst not know again.

Smile in Today; whate'er the morrow brings thee,  
Smile in Today, while yet thy heart is glad;  
Be thou the songster that in gladness sings free;  
Today is bright; Tomorrow may be sad.

Today Life's harp is tuned to notes of gladness,  
Deft Happiness the sweetest notes may raise.  
Tomorrow strikes its wailing strings to sadness,  
And memory only mournful music plays.

## THE DEATH OF POETRY

(There is no demand for poetry, according to one of the greatest of international publishers.—Daily Paper.)

LAY her and her muted lyre  
Here together on this pyre.  
And the laurels she has won,  
Lay them, lay them one by one  
As a pillow for head,  
Who lies here, forlorn and dead.

None to mourn her, none to praise.  
Homer loved her in his days;  
Sappho struck the lyre of her,  
Petrarch was her worshipper,  
Virgil, Dante—all are mute,  
Hers a split and silenced lute.

Burns her erring child and poor,  
Byron wooed her and did Moore  
From her happiest moods beguile  
Sweetness in a worded smile.  
And where subtle Shelly slept  
She paused once an hour—and wept.

Regal, beautiful, she stood  
In her glorious goddesshood,  
Bade Shakespeare, her child to be  
By her own divinity  
Half god-like, and where she trod  
Hallowed man and worshipped God.

## THE DEATH OF POETRY

By vagrant stream and eerie wood  
She wandered with the merry Hood.  
Piped her pastoral lays oft were  
With Goldsmith as interpreter,  
And Whitman knew her dreamy days.  
And went with her up mountain ways.

When gloomy Poe her favor sued,  
She listened and she understood.  
Holmes claimed her joyous presence oft,  
And Bryant knew her in her soft  
And gracious whiles, and Whittier  
In green fields would walk with her.

A minister to grief, she moved  
By many wooed, yet few she loved,  
And those she best beloved, she lent  
Her grandeur of the firmament,  
Of seas and skies and subtle arts,  
Of love and grief and human hearts.

Here upon the funeral pyre  
Lay her and her muted lyre.  
Know ye, mourners at her bier,  
'Tis a goddess that lies here.  
And above ye all as far  
As the weeping angels are.

## LOOK UP

EACH little day  
That slips away  
And finds for thee no pleasure,  
That steals along  
Without a song,  
Is just a wasted treasure.

The sands that pass  
Through the hour glass  
And find thee in repining,  
Mark the lost hours.  
The freshest flowers  
Blow when the sun is shining.

Thou shalt not grope  
For the lost hope  
Through darkness dim, unending.  
Ne'er vain regret  
Succeeded yet  
A broken thread in mending.

## LOOK UP

The chance that's lost,  
Let not the cost  
Be flowing tears and sighing,  
When countless more  
From life's vast store  
Are to be had for trying.

So put away  
Thy cares today,  
And cease thy fate reviling ;  
For Chance eludes  
The soul that broods,  
And courts the soul that's smiling.

## DREAMS

If the iceman should come to me some day,  
While weighing out a piece at my back door,  
And, dropping it upon the porch, would say :  
"It was so cold last year and year before,  
The crop is long and we have cut the price"—  
If he should just say that and lay the ice  
On my back steps and then drive on—but hush !  
Such dreams as this are only silly gush.

Or if the butcher, wrapping up my steak,  
Should say : "You know, the corn crop was so vast,  
And feed so cheap, we're able now to make  
A slight reduction in the price at last"—  
I say, if he should tell me that and take  
Two cents a pound from last week's price of steak,  
I wonder if the shock—but pshaw ! why spare  
The time to build such castles in the air ?

Or if the baker, doling out my bread,  
Should put a penny back into my hand,  
And say : "The world will be more cheaply fed,  
Since there is a large wheat crop in the land"—  
I say, if he should voluntarily  
Return a single penny unto me,  
I wonder if I'd be—but, Heart, be still ;  
There is no possibility he will !

## DREAMS

Or if my tailor, deftly sizing me

For a new suit, should say: "You know that sheep  
Are multiplying fast and wool will be

In cloth upon the market very cheap"—

I say, if he should just say that and take

Five dollars from the price—well, then, I'd wake  
Right up and rub my sleepy eyes and laugh,  
To think of tailors giving me such chaff.

I know that these are merely dreams—that ice

And meat and bread are going up—that crop  
Or weather will do naught but *raise* the price;

There is no likelihood of any drop;

But my employer tells me he will give

Me higher wage—it costs so much to live—

So now I do not need to skimp and scratch—  
My pipe is out! Has any one a match?

## INDESTRUCTIBLE

A WREATH of roses hung upon a stone,  
Above me, this alone.

A sob that floats, and falling tear on tear  
Descending here.

Some soul in sorrow kneeling at the tomb,  
And in the gloom,

Pouring above me to the silent air  
Its deep despair.

Though cold the pulseless clay and deaf the ear,  
Yet I still hear.

Though the thick shadows endlessly shall flow,  
Still shall I know.

Though from the dumb, dead tenement in flight  
Wing life and light,

Yet not deserted lies the silent clay,  
For Love shall stay.

Crumble the stone and in the dust shall lie,  
Yet Love not die.

Through the long night when the dark shadows creep,  
Not even sleep,

But whisper from the silence of the bier:  
“Lo! I am here.”

## A REALLY PRETTY GIRL

I HAVE traveled alien countries (through the medium of books)

I have seen (in photogravures) Italy's sunburnished skies;

I've had (stereoptic) visions of cliff-bounded mountain brooks,

And the camera has brought me where Killarney's splendor lies.

In the biograph exhibits I have trodden courts of kings,

To the ends of earth (in lectures) I have let my senses whirl,

And it all one sage conclusion to my comprehension brings:

There is nothing half as splendid as a really pretty girl.

I have seen (in scenic albums) all the gardens of the East,

I have been (in dreams fantastic) where the tropic breezes blow,

I have watched (in moving pictures) where Niagara like yeast

Frothed above its splendid chasm and upon the rocks below.

By the banks of the Euphrates (done on canvas) I have strolled,

In the valley of Yosemite seen scenic glories whirl

In kaleidoscopic splendor, but when all the tale is told,

There is nothing half as splendid as a really pretty girl.

## A REALLY PRETTY GIRL

When Nature did the firmament and splashed the sombre skies  
With the splendor of the dawning; when she set the moon and stars  
As the jewels in the crown of Night and with her gorgeous dyes  
Made glorious the garden where the nodding flowers are,  
She had in mind a vision far beyond the dreams of kings,  
A tingling inspiration that set every sense a-whirl  
So after she had practiced on these quite imperfect things  
She set to work and fashioned us a really pretty girl.

## WAR

UNANGERED columns hurled upon a foe;  
Blood guiltless souls made gory at a word;  
Cheeks drenched with tears and widowed women's woe  
In the long wail of cloistered sorrow heard.  
Man at a cry made furious and grim  
With scent of blood and smoke of bursting shell;  
Dead faces on a field upturned to Him,  
And spirits flown—to Heaven or to Hell?

Smoke, like the fumes from Hell's own caldron curled;  
Men schooled to murder at a bugle's blare;  
Emblems of empire from a staff unfurled,  
Blades drawn from scabbards, bidden slay nor spare.  
Man and his brother, Man, the tie forgot,  
Each with his eye light with the lust of Cain;  
Blood, as the breech of belching cannon, hot  
Leaping to splash the battled hill or plain.

Night! And long trenches with the dead thick laid.  
Sleep! And wan beacons flaring in the sky.  
Rest! Claims a truce the blood-incrusted blade.  
Dreams! Of the dead and those so soon to die.  
Hark! 'Tis the bugle! And, with bloody hands,  
Sleep greets the dawn and Murder comes from bed!  
Lives are the ancient sacrifice of Lands.  
Vainglory heaps her altar fires with dead.

## THE CHOSEN ONES

THAT fellowship of genius, unconstrained  
Of place or riches; nor its precincts gained  
Of loud alarum; for a brazen gate  
Thick-metaled, bids the wanderer await  
Until the sacred password is approved  
By Him who loveth art for art beloved.

Nor ever ringeth false upon His ear  
That magic word that bids the gate swing clear,  
The moated ditches close, the drawbridge fall,  
The sentinels move harmless on the wall,  
The feast be spread, the laureled wreath be wove,  
For him who bears the signet-ring of Love.

Not any soul discordant at the feast,  
Not any greatest one or any least,  
But all of common stature, having sipped  
The cup whose golden sides have dripped and dripped  
With the rare wine of Song, whose vineyards lie  
Where the clear blue of the Parnassian sky  
Dips down to earth to lift the souls of men  
That fell from Heaven back to Heaven again.

## THE CHOSEN ONES

And in that din and clamor I await  
The message that He sends who guards the gate.  
To bid me come within or bid me lay  
My dreams aside and diligently stray  
By field and stream and under the blue sky,  
Seeking the truth afar with eager eye.

Through many a sleepless night and weary day  
To serve with patience, suffer, learn, and pray,  
Until I gain the Secret, and the gate  
Shall be flung wide and those great souls await  
To welcome me, who, like me, unafraid,  
Untiring, patient, at the altar laid  
Their offerings once and once and once again,  
And once a hundred times, and more; till then  
They learned that patience was the word that bade  
The gate swing wide and waiting souls be glad!

## THE TEST OF FAME

I do not yearn for splendid fame—  
A little share will do for me,  
And in the busy mundane game  
Of life, I'd simply like to see  
The time, when, seeing me in print,  
Folks would look at my name again,  
And, glancing up from it, just hint  
Of me: "Oh, yes, I knew him when—"

It really isn't much to ask,  
And yet it is a splendid test  
Of those, more fortunate, who bask  
In smiles Fate gives those she loves best,  
If when my name, perchance, was read,  
Some good soul would arise and then  
Not speak some fulsome praise—instead  
Just say: "Oh, yes, I knew him when—"

## THE TEST OF FAME

I really wouldn't care, you know,  
Just when I had been known before,  
Or whether I'd been shoveling snow  
Or peddling ice or keeping store,  
Just so, whene'er my name was heard  
Through some creation of my pen,  
Some listening person might be stirred  
To say: "Oh, yes, I knew him when—"

So all I ask of fickle fame  
Is this, I think, quite modest boon.  
I do not ask a brilliant flame,  
That lights the world, but dies too soon;  
I only ask that some fine day  
Those sweetest words of tongue or pen  
Old friends of mine be moved to say  
Of me: "Oh, yes, I knew him when—"

## THE FOOL

THE Fool raised up a castle tall  
With haughty spire and pillared hall  
And circled 'round a mighty wall.

Bolted and barred, with donjon keep,  
With mighty battlements and steep  
All moat-encompassed, wide and deep.

Raised he aloft the drawbridge wide,  
Clanged he the massive door with pride:  
"Safe here am I what e'er betide."

Death dimly viewed his stout defense,  
Smiled on the frowning battlements  
And called his servant, Pestilence.

Set him upon the wind to ride.  
"Go seek this haughty Fool" he cried,  
"To strike him all his bars inside!"

Grim frowns the castled pile and bold,  
Grim frown the hoary stones and old.  
Within the Fool lies, still and cold.

## INES TO A MOTH

BLIND thing! Thou scourge of fretful dame  
That stumbles in the glaring light  
To beat its blistered wings in flame—  
What stubborn blindness marks thy flight.

What is it leads thee to the light?  
What ignorance that bids thee fly  
Upon the flame whose scorching blight  
Thy folly findeth but to die.

Is then thy ignorance so gross,  
So sotted thy intelligence  
As not to learn from scourge or loss  
Or profit by experience?

A moment and I saw thee fling  
Thyself upon the flame and then  
Reel from the light with scorched wing,  
And now I find thee there again.

Blind, blind thou art! A stubborn fool,  
To teach thee wisdom all has failed,  
For ere thy blistered wings are cool  
Thou 'rt back to where thou wert assailed.

## LINES TO A MOTH

Yet, stay, thou dullard! In thy flight  
Some subtle message bids me see  
Myself, a struggler in the light  
Of knowledge that is not for me.

Like thee, I beat my wings in vain  
Upon the candle's wick, to find  
My little soul in dust again,  
My little vision dull and blind.

Like thee, I crave the fiercer light  
Of learning and the mystery  
Of Life, and in my stumbling flight  
I am but dull and blind, like thee.

I called thee dullard for thy way—  
I tender my apology,  
Thou art a fool, again I say—  
Thou art a fool—a fool like me!

## AN AUTUMN REVERIE

AUTUMN, the artist, enters in at the door of September,  
Fields and the forests her studios; with the hand of  
the Master  
Mixes her colors and touches with gold the green of  
the landscape;  
Down from the whispering trees the gilded leaves  
rustle and flutter  
Russet and yellow and gold, lying like half finished  
sketches;  
Scattered about by the winds. Lies sere and yellow  
the stubble,  
Yellow and russet and red, as were the stripped fields  
the palettes  
Whereon she mixes her colors. Down the long hedge-  
rows and copses,  
Graceful she glides in the twilight and in the night  
with the shadows  
Plies all her brushes unthinking, inspired, as the soul  
of the genius  
Glowing from unseen flames, glistens and gleams and  
illumines  
Darker souls with its light. So Autumn the artist  
enters,  
Fields and the forests her studios. With the hand of  
the Master  
Mixing her colors; and leaves from the whispering  
tree tops that flutter  
Lie in the fields and scattered about like half finished  
sketches.

## LINES FROM A CRITICAL FRIEND

DEAR J:—The things you've done in verse  
Are bad enough, the good Lord knows,  
And yet, withal, I've read some worse,  
Which are the things you've done in prose.

'Tis not a critic could assist  
Your verse but a chiropodist,  
By methods heroic to treat  
The corns on your poetic feet.

Yet why despair? Let us not shrink;  
A book is only types and ink;  
And poems may be poured like wine  
By placing letters in a line.

If every other line shall blend  
In rhyme at one or t'other end  
The trick is done—the Poet's muse  
Might be a cobbler fitting shoes.

Enough the stanza 's weird and tense,  
For what to us is common sense,  
When what 's not to be understood  
Is doubly sure to be called good.

So drive a spigot in the cask,  
And turn the faucet, hold the flask,  
Let flow the wine of poetry,  
The world is writing—why not we?

## LINES FROM A CRITICAL FRIEND

Old Omar wrote, a drinking lout,  
And doubtless wondered what about;  
The Future's literary elves  
Will read us better than ourselves.

Trust literary wights to see  
The depths of hidden mystery;  
And read in us, from A to end  
The things we never did intend.

'Tis not to write a simple screed  
So plain that he who runs may read;  
Real genius writes a fearsome one  
That he who reads in fright may run.

What scalding tears the Saints might weep  
(Were writing fluid not so cheap),  
To view the sea of ink that flows  
In inane verse and insane prose.

While pens and paper still are made  
In plenty shall we be dismayed?  
Nay! Grasp the pen with firmer hand  
And join the paper-spoiling band.

Then drive the spigot in the cask  
And turn the faucet—hold the flask;  
Let flow the wine of poetry,  
The world is writing—why not we?

## THE COST OF LIVING

WHAT is the cost of living?  
The price of bread and a bone?  
The thirst of the parched lips for drink  
And the cry for food alone?  
Masters of facts and figures,  
Ye who have writ the scroll,  
Count ye the cost as a huckster's charge  
With never a thought of soul?

Ye with the bloodless story  
Of figures and fact arrayed,  
Heard ye no tale of the mother's pain  
On the bed where the child is laid?  
Ye tell the cost of living,  
Took ye no thought on it—  
The anguished price that a mother pays  
And the patience infinite?

What is the cost of living?  
Saw ye no blind and lame?  
Heard ye no cry of a soul's despair?  
Saw ye no blush of shame?  
Met ye no disappointed?  
Dried ye no tearful eye  
That wept o'er the clay of an idol dead  
Ere the sun was noonday high?

## THE COST OF LIVING

What is the cost of living?  
Heard ye of none who died  
High on a cross of shattered hopes  
And longings unsatisfied?  
Saw ye no slaves unwilling?  
Heard ye no bitter cry  
Of men accursed with the taint of sin  
Fearing to live or die?

What is the cost of living?  
All of our toil and tears.  
All of our doubts and sorrows,  
All of our woes and fears.  
Grim and with greed increasing  
Life for his debt claims pay,  
Never the sum decreasing,  
Now or ever or aye!

## THE UNSOUNDED DEPTHS

The sweetest song is the unsung,  
Unspoken is the kindest word,  
The clearest chime the heart's unrung,  
The grandest music the unheard.

Nor singer grand, nor bard with lyre,  
Within his sweetest song may hold  
The fullness of the flaming fire  
That leaps within, but is not told.

There is a grandeur and sublime  
That lingers hidden in the heart;  
That will not speak in note or rhyme,  
The fire, unseen, that flames apart.

The grandest deed is that, undone,  
Whose endless promptings veer and roll  
But take no shape—the rayless sun  
That shines unseen within the soul.

And, deed or song or rhyme or word,  
That soul may stir, or heart may fill,  
There is a sweeter far, unheard,  
An unseen beauty, grander still.

No tongue can tell the deepest roll,  
Where, all unfathomed, sweep apart  
The ocean waters of the soul,  
The depths unseen, within the heart.

## COMPENSATION

HAD we not met we had not known these sighs,  
These heartaches and these leaden-wingèd years,  
The sorrows speaking in these grief-wet eyes;  
Had we not met we had not known these tears.

And yet, had we not met, we had not known  
The bliss of gladness in those other whiles,  
Ere the gay-plumaged yesterday had flown.  
Had we not met we had not known those smiles.

## DAME FASHION

Who is Dame Fashion?  
Why, nobody knows;  
Or where she may come from  
Or whither she goes;  
She merely says "Presto!  
Go alter your clothes!"  
And we all obey her;  
Why, nobody knows.

She's always a ruler  
Without any throne;  
She comes in a breath,  
In another she's gone;  
I know I despise her  
And so, too, do you,  
We scold her and scorn her  
(And follow her, too.)

She looks at your dress  
And she says it won't do;  
It's too—too—well, you know,  
It's just simply too—  
Too what? It don't matter.  
Too why? I can't say.  
Dame Fashion decrees it,  
That makes it O. K.

## DAME FASHION

Your hat is too fussy,  
It ought to be plain,  
'Twas fussy last season,  
It may be again.  
But that doesn't alter  
The fact that today  
Dame Fashion decrees that  
Your hat is passe.

So it's off to the tailor  
To buy some new clothes.  
Why? It's no matter  
For nobody knows.  
Dame Fashion has spoken:  
"Go, alter your clothes!"  
And lo! We obey her.  
Why? Nobody knows.

Oh, skirts may be skimpy  
Or skirts may be full;  
And skirts may be silken  
Or skirts may be wool.  
"It's style," so they tell you,  
It's style—and it GOES!  
Who made it? Don't ask me  
For nobody knows!

## SORROW

WHAT is the chiefest sorrow?  
    “ ’Tis shame,” thus Honor cried.  
“ ’Tis failure,” said Ambition;  
    “ Nay, infamy,” said Pride.  
Cried Gluttony, “ ’tis hunger.”  
    The Cynic said “ ’tis breath.”  
While Love gazed on a cold, dead child  
    And murmured, “Nay, ’tis Death.”

What is the chiefest sorrow?  
    Said Wealth, “ ’tis Beggary.”  
“ ’Tis loss,” the Miser muttered,  
    And Sloth said: “Industry.”  
“ Tis war,” Peace shyly whispered;  
    “ ’Tis ignorance,” the Sage.  
While Youth peered far into the years  
    And murmured, “Nay, ’tis Age.”

## SORROW

What is the chiefest sorrow?  
“ ‘Tis duty,” Vice replied.  
“ ‘Tis waste,” Thrift boldly answered.  
“ ‘Tis Life,” thus Failure sighed.  
“Nay, ‘tis but Grief,” said Pleasure,  
“Defeat,” said Victory,  
Said Truth, “ ‘tis Thine, my Master,  
Thine in my sin and me.”

“Yet though in pride and power,  
I had forgotten Thee;  
Though Thine the chiefest sorrow,  
Thine in my sin and me,  
The tears that flow from Heaven  
Are Sorrow’s victory,  
The flower of Thy pardon  
Blooms in Gethsemane.”

## BENEATH THE SNOWS

THERE are flowers of good cheer growing close by the  
way

That stretches from dark to the dawn;  
Full wreathed in the green leaves of smiles, so they  
say,

And never or ever are gone.  
The snows of misfortune deep mantling the ground,  
The blasts from the Northland grow shrill,  
Beneath we may find them full blooming around,  
And pluck them whenever we will.

There are ripples of laughter down deep in the heart,  
As flowers that bloom 'neath the snows;  
Though fettered with ice there is water apart,  
That tinkles and trills as it flows.

The breath of Misfortune may strew its hoar frost,  
The moan of the winter be chill,  
The music of joy be afar but not lost,  
And we may still hear, if we will.

There are songs of Delight on the wings of the wind,  
Though hoarser the tempest we hear;  
Though fierce in its raging the wild storm has dinned  
Its discord of strife on the ear.  
The deep diapason, the storm's sullen roar,  
Shall sink to a murmur, be still;  
And songs that are sweeter shall tremble once more,  
The songs we may hear, if we will.

## GLADNESS BY THE WAY

LET us smile along together,  
Be the weather  
    What it may.

Through the waste and wealth of hours,  
Plucking flowers  
    By the way.

Fragrance from the meadows blowing,  
Naught of heat or hatred knowing,  
Kindness seeking, kindness sowing,  
    Not tomorrow, but today.

Let us sing along, beguiling  
Grief to smiling  
    In the song.  
With the promises of heaven  
Let us leaven  
    The day long.

Gilding all the duller seemings  
With the roselight of our dreamings,  
Splashing clouds with sunlight's gleamings,  
    Here and there and all along.

## GLADNESS BY THE WAY

Let us live along; the sorrow  
Of tomorrow  
Never heed.

In the pages of the present  
What is pleasant  
Only read.

Bells but pealing, never knelling,  
Hearts with gladness ever swelling,  
Tides of charity upwelling  
In our every dream and deed.

Let us hope along together,  
Be the weather  
What it may,  
Where the sunlight glad is shining,  
Not repining  
By the way,  
Seek to add our meed and measure  
To the old Earth's joy and treasure,  
Quaff the crystal cup of pleasure,  
Not tomorrow, but today.

## THE OPTIMIST'S FEAST

BRING me a bowl of sunshine, Lass,  
From the fount of a rosy dawn;  
A frozen rainbow for my glass  
Ere the sparkle of it is gone;  
The silver lining of a cloud  
As a cloth for my table here,  
And sing me a merry song aloud  
With a voice that is sweet and clear.

Bring me the blue of a sunny sky  
And cast it overhead,  
Lay me a rug of clover by  
Like a wave of velvet spread;  
Shower me over with cherry flowers  
Just bursting to full bloom,  
To freshen this perfect day of ours  
With spice of their sweet perfume.

## THE OPTIMIST'S FEAST

Drape me the black of a midnight sky,  
And stud it with stars of white,  
To hang my walls with a tapestry  
Rare as the peace of night;  
Stretch me a frieze of clouds that lie  
Over the sunlit hills,  
Where the bowl of sunshine, brimming high,  
Just overflows and spills

And my cloth shall be soft as the rose's cheek,  
And my heart strings shall be atune,  
All, all of my bidden guests shall speak  
With tongues of the birds in June;  
So,—a bowl of sun from a rifted cloud,  
And set it before me here,  
And sing me a merry song aloud  
With a voice that is sweet and clear.

## THE GARDEN OF YESTERDAY

I KNOW a garden fair to see, where haunting memories  
there be  
Of treasures lost and joys of ours, forgotten, left  
among the flowers;  
Like toys of children strewn upon the playground of  
the leaf and lawn;  
And many stand without the gate who learn with hearts  
disconsolate  
It swings but out and none may go in search of treas-  
ures scattered so,  
For Time is keeper of the way—the Garden there is  
Yesterday.

All day I stood beside the gate from dawn to dusk, and  
saw them wait,  
To plead with him to clear the way, that they might  
search in Yesterday;  
But to them all he shook his head, “The way forever  
closed,” he said;  
“I lost a child,” the mother cried; “A sweetheart I,”  
the lover sighed;  
“A song,” the poet said, “was there, sweet-voiced, in-  
effable and rare;”  
But Time, unyielding, held the way: “The place is  
mine—’tis Yesterday!”

## THE GARDEN OF YESTERDAY

And came a schoolgirl, tearful-eyed: "My playmate!"  
sorrowful, she cried;  
The felon said: "My liberty—will you not give it back  
to me?"  
"My gold," the miser prayed, "'tis there, the hoard I  
loved and could not spare;"  
"My youth is there," the old man said; the widow  
whispered low: "My dead."  
"My honor," faltered the weak knave; "my strength,"  
the sodden, sotted slave;  
And one by one they came to pray they might go back  
to Yesterday.

And somewhere in the Garden gleam the gems of in-  
nocence and dream;  
And somewhere are the loves that were; the eyes and  
cheeks, the lips of Her.  
Somewhere the hearts from sorrow free and all the  
joy that was to be;  
The peace of Honor yet unsoiled; Ambition's sweet-  
ness still unspoiled;  
The ties of love, the strength of youth, the hearts of  
hope, the ways of truth;  
But Time is keeper of the way—the place is his, 'tis  
Yesterday!

## SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

Do you come nearer day by day  
To the port where your dreams all anchored lie?  
Or do you sail farther and far away  
In an angry sea with a sullen sky?  
Do you come nearer the Ought-to-be  
In the wagon you hitched to a distant star?  
Or do you drift on hopelessly,  
Content to bide with the Things-that-are?

Are you a Drone or a Do-it-now?  
A Hurry-up or a Wait-a-while?  
A Do-it-so or an Anyhow?  
A Cheer-up-boys or a Never-smile?  
It's none of my business, that I know,  
For you are the captain and mate and crew  
Of that ship of yours, but the Where-you-go  
Depends on the What-and-how-you-do.

Are you a Yes or Maybe-so?  
Are you a Will or a Guess-you'll-be?  
A Come-on-lads or a Let's-not-go?  
A Yes-I-will or an Oh-I'll-see?  
It isn't the least concern of mine,  
I know that well, but as time endures,  
When they thresh the wheat and store the wine,  
You'll find it a big concern of *yours*.

## HOME

THE uncertain hum of the prairies when twilight is  
dim,

The wash of the seas on a battlement rocky and grim,  
The unbroken forest that breathes a druidical hymn.

The plainsman, sun-beaten, hears voices from hollow  
and swell,

And where from the mist of the distance the deep  
shadows fell,

They came with low murmurs—the hum of the tenant-  
less shell.

The woodsman hears voices—the sigh of the bough,  
swinging low,

The flutter of leaves in the dusk, till their choruses  
grow

To be the sweet songs that his forest has taught him  
to know.

The sailor hears voices—the wash of the low-lying sea,  
The flap of the gull in the dusk and the harmonies he  
Has learned from the Deep, as the Master has bade  
it to be.

## HOME

The plainsman heard voices—the song that the forester knew,  
And shuddered at dusk, for his burden of lonesomeness grew,  
Nor comfort he found in the song of the oak tree or yew.

The woodsman heard voices—the wash of the low-lying seas  
And shuddered at dusk, for they were not the sweet harmonies  
His Master had taught him to know in his leaves and his trees.

The sailor heard voices—the murmur of hollow and swell  
And shuddered at dusk when his burden of lonesomeness fell  
Upon him alone, with the hum of the tenantless shell.

And yet all alone in the night where the thick shadows creep  
The plainsman is bold on his prairies and lays him to sleep,  
Nor the woodsman fears aught of his trees, nor the sailor his Deep.

## THE REVERIES OF A WIDOW

### I.—THE WORM.

Now am I like a worm condemned to crawl,  
My happiness to burrow in the earth,  
Seeking communion with the shape of all  
My soul held dear; to shun the cup of mirth;  
To banish laughter as a thing profane;  
To weed myself in black; to rear a stone;  
To bury hope; to wander down the lane  
Of life forsaken, cheerless, and alone.

### II.—THE CHRYSALIS.

What shape takes now my soul that is not woe  
Nor yet is happiness; but half between  
The two; the earth where I was want to go  
For comfort chills me as a thing unclean;  
I am who am wife nor maid, what bids me leave  
This self-abased state and take on wings  
To fly with? Is't forbidden I shall grieve  
So long upon the dust of earthly things?

### III.—THE BUTTERFLY.

What airy wings are these, and delicate  
That lift my soul from earth and on this flower  
Of hope bid me to rest and sip, nor fret  
Upon the sorrow of a vanished hour?  
Was it my soul that yesterday was cast  
Into the dust? Oh, Time, what magic lies  
In that weird wand of thine that gives at last  
To worms the shape and wings of butterflies?

## THE OLD PUMP'S FAREWELL

AYE, root me up like some dead tree  
Bereft of leaf and shade,  
And in some corner let me be  
Irreverently laid,  
To waste my bones in rot and rust,  
And let me, once who gave  
Cool draughts to man and beast, in dust  
Find an unhonored grave.

It was thy father set me here  
A score of years ago,  
And bade cool water, crystal clear,  
In grateful streams to flow.  
In all my years no thirsty lout  
For drink of me has cried  
And from my overflowing spout  
Has gone unsatisfied.

The children, rioting from school,  
Have sought my dripping spout,  
Whence sparkling water, clear and cool,  
In torrents gushing out,  
Brought thirst a comforting eclipse  
With its refreshing draught,  
And ah! the sweetness of their lips  
Pressed to me as they quaffed.

## THE OLD PUMP'S FAREWELL

Then, speeding onward to their play,  
I heard their merry cries,  
And like the tears that drip away  
In gladness from the eyes,  
The cool drops flowed and trickled down  
My iron cheek, to see  
How from far corners of the town  
The thirsty came to me.

The dusty yokel, worn and tasked,  
Tramped to me from the road,  
Gripped hands with me, and all unasked  
The grateful waters flowed.  
The cup held by its clanking chain  
He lifted oft and drained  
Its crystal waters once again,  
And some new vigor gained.

And, ah, those patient beasts that brought  
Their noses to my tank,  
When the red sun beat fiercely hot  
And drank, and drank, and drank  
With mighty draughts and deep until  
My labors were nigh vain  
To give them drink enough and fill  
My water tub again.

## THE OLD PUMP'S FAREWELL

Nor all my score of years till now  
    Have I once failed to cool  
The thirsty lip and fevered brow  
    From that still rippling pool  
Wherein my feet have stood. My cup  
    In ready hands and strong  
Has dipped its crystal waters up  
    So long, so long, so long!

But now my joints are worn and old,  
    My spout is parched and dry;  
My cup's a-leak and will not hold  
    My drink, howe'er I try.  
So root me up like some old tree  
    Bereft of leaf and shade,  
And in some corner let me be  
    Irreverently laid.

## THE HEART'S LOST

Not that the dead leaves are tossed  
Is the sharpness of grief;  
Not that the tints of the frost  
Streak the green of the leaf.

Not in the shroud of the snow  
That the winter has spread,  
Not in the pall is our woe  
For the summer that's dead.

Not that the ice fetters hush  
The sweet voice of the rill;  
Not that the song of the thrush  
In the forest is still.

Not that the woodbine is dead  
On the window and wall;  
Not that the robin has fled  
From the stripped tree and tall.

Not that the ash of the rose  
In the dust scattered lies,  
Not in the breath of the snows  
Or the winter's wild cries.

But Oh, Heart, what sorrows they bring,  
When the red leaves are spread!  
And Oh, Heart, what dirges they sing  
To thee of thy dead!

## THE VOICES OF SONG

THEY come to me on wings of air, with plaintive lullabies,  
And many songs and music rare they bring from domeless skies;  
Ah, me! They bid my soul be fair, and nobler dreams rise!

Naught am I but interpreter of dreams they bring to me  
In hidden harmonies that were all veiled in mystery  
Until She bade them speak through Her—and She is Poetry.

So many, many moods beguile the sweetness of Her hours!  
She frowns, and now again Her smile has all the speech of flowers,  
And lulling dreams Her moments while in cool and shady bowers.

And often in the moonless night on wings of lurid flame,  
Her head all aureoled with light, in majesty She came,  
And bade me reach my pen and write—nor theme I knew, nor name.

## THE VOICES OF SONG

Nor aught vouchsafing me of why, in Her imperious mood,

She bade me only write, and I but little understood, Save I was slave to Her, to die or flourish, as She would.

Then voices whispered in my ears, like songs from distant choirs,

And one told me the tale of tears, and one of those hot fires

That flame through all the sweep of years in Time's consuming pyres.

And one was Laughter's merry tune, and one was like the rain

That in the gloomy night-tide's noon but beats and beats again,

Till crackling sedge and sandy dune are wet with tears of Pain.

Then War's tumultuous voice arose, in the harsh notes of Hate,

And thrusts and shots and shouts and blows, and thirst insatiate

For blood, and a red river flows where beaked vultures wait.

## THE VOICES OF SONG

And Love's voice was among the rest that murmured  
    in my ears,  
With flute-like carolings, all blest with the delight of  
    tears,  
As Grief, her sister, sably drest, walked with her down  
    the years.

My soul was but a harp, and She played gloriously and  
    long,  
As might a Master, curiously, with practiced touch  
    and strong,  
Strike all the waiting strings to see if it were fit for  
    song.

Then all the babbling tongues were stilled, and in the  
    dreamy night  
My flagging pen to words I willed. Alas! I could not  
    write;  
And darkness all my senses filled that She had made  
    so light.

Nor soul of man has understood, nor tongue or man  
    can say  
Why never comes She when I would, nor prayers will  
    bid her stay;  
But, like a lass for favor sued, turns in caprice away.

But Genius, like a lover, knows the songs of seraphim  
That follow in Her train, and goes with laughing eye  
    or dim  
To sit with Her when Music flows and She would  
    speak with him!

## THE SONG OF THE DINNER BELL

As long as they fry spring chicken,  
As long as young squabs are born,  
As long as my pulses quicken  
At platters of fresh green corn,  
Sing me no mournful numbers,  
Chant me no solemn song;  
As long as we've sliced cucumbers  
I guess I can get along.

As long as we've baked potatoes  
That fluff out like flakes of snow,  
As long as we've sliced tomatoes,  
As long as young turkeys grow,  
Bring me no pale and pallid  
Refrain from a funeral song;  
As long as we've sweetbread salad  
I guess I can get along.

Bid not mine eyes be moist or  
Red from expected woes,  
As long as they leave an oyster,  
As long as a lobster grows,  
How can the times be tearful,  
How can the world be sad?  
How can we not be cheerful  
As long as they plank roe-shad?

## THE SONG OF THE DINNER BELL

As long as the tall, hot biscuit  
Is dripping with honey sweet,  
You may hate the world—I'll risk it  
As long as we've things to eat.  
No praises that I might utter,  
No splendors my fancy spreads,  
Compare with the yellow butter  
Spread thick on fresh home-made bread.

What is the sense of spoiling  
Life, with its bill-of-fare?  
As long as we've mushrooms broiling  
Where is the room for care?  
Why should our troubles fret us,  
Why should our hopes e'er fade,  
As long as we've crisp head-lettuce,  
With mayonnaise overlaid?

Peace to thy sighing, brother;  
See that thy tears are dried.  
Get thee a steak, and smother  
It with some onions, fried.  
Turkey with oyster dressing,  
Beef with its gravy brown.  
Life? It is one grand blessing—  
Dinner is served—sit down!

## THE REAL ISSUE

THERE are two issues, after all,  
Above the ones that speech may call  
    Or wisdom utter;  
Two issues that with me and you  
Are most important—and the two  
    Are bread and butter.

Let patriotic banners wave,  
Let economic speakers rave;  
    'Tis not potential  
That Art proclaim or Music sing,  
The Loaf is, after all, the thing  
    That's most essential.

Truth seeks some broader meeting place  
For breed or clan or tribe or race,  
    For saint and sinner;  
But after all the noise and fuss  
The issue paramount with us  
    Is—What for dinner?

## THE REAL ISSUE

New theories we may evolve,  
Old governments we may dissolve,  
    New flags float o'er us,  
And Truth may search and Wisdom think,  
Still these two planks of meat and drink  
    Are yet before us.

So let contention hotly wage  
And let the wars of logic rage  
    In discourse fretted;  
When all the clamor is complete  
The issue still is what to eat—  
    And how to get it!

## THE WOES OF THE CONSUMER

I'm only a consumer and it really doesn't matter  
How they crowd me in the street cars till I couldn't  
well be flatter;

I'm only a consumer and the strikers may go striking  
For it's mine to end my living if it isn't to my liking.  
I am only a consumer and I have no special mission  
Except to pay the damages. Mine is a queer position,  
The Fates unite to squeeze me till I couldn't well be  
flatter

But I'm only a consumer, so it really doesn't matter.

The baker tilts the price of bread upon the vaguest  
rumor

Of damage to the wheat crop, but I'm only a consumer  
So it really doesn't matter, for there's no law that  
compels me.

To pay the added charges on the loaf of bread he sells  
me.

The ice man leaves a smaller piece when days are  
growing hotter

But I'm only a consumer and I do not need iced water,  
My business is to draw the checks and keep in a good  
humor

And it really doesn't matter, for I'm only a consumer!

## THE WOES OF THE CONSUMER

The milkman waters milk for me ; there's garlic in my butter

But I'm only a consumer, so it does no good to mutter.  
I know that coal is going up and beef is getting higher  
But I'm only a consumer and I have no need of fire.  
And beefsteak is a luxury that wealth alone is needing,  
I'm only a consumer and I have no need of feeding.  
My business is to pay the bills and keep in a good humor

For I have no other mission, since I'm only a consumer.

The grocer sells me addled eggs ; the tailor sells me shoddy

But I'm only a consumer and I am not anybody.  
The cobbler pegs me paper soles ; the dairyman short weights me,

I'm only a consumer and most everybody hates me.  
There's turnip in my pumpkin pie and ashes in my pepper,

The world's my lazaretto and I'm nothing but a leper,  
So lay me in my lonely grave and tread the turf down flatter,

I'm only a consumer and it really doesn't matter.

## VANITY

At five a maiden's wants are few :  
A set of blocks, a doll or two ;  
A little place inside to play  
If it should come a rainy day ;  
A pair of shoes, a pinafore ;  
I really think of nothing more.

Nor wants she overmuch at ten ;  
A birthday party now and then,  
A bit of ribbon for her hair,  
A little better dress to wear,  
Perhaps a pony cart to drive—  
A bit more than she did at five.

A modest increase at fifteen ;  
A party dress, in red or green,  
A room alone that she may fix  
With bric-a-brac and candlesticks,  
A parasol, a fan—and, oh !  
I quite forgot to add—a beau.

## VANITY

At twenty she is quite above  
All childish wants—she asks but love,  
And dreams of Princes, tall and fair,  
Who come a-wooing and who dare  
All dangers; and she keeps apart  
For him the castle of her heart.

At twenty-five her fancy goes  
To bonnets, frills, and furbelows,  
A country place, a house in town,  
A better rig than Mrs. Brown  
Or Black or Jones, and just a wee  
Small figure in Society.

At thirty—well, a little tea  
For the distinguished Mrs. B.,  
Who writes—a Prince to entertain,  
A long-haired Lion to make vain  
With silly tricks, a horse show box  
And just a little plunge in stocks.

At thirty-five and forty—well  
There isn't much that's new to tell;  
A little bigger country place,  
A real good lotion for her face,  
And some reduction made in those  
One can afford to say she knows.

## VANITY

At fifty—does her fancy end?  
She wants—ah, yes, she wants a friend  
To prove her years were not in vain;  
She wants those dreams of youth again,  
When Princes-errant, tall and fair,  
Lived, loved, and came a-wooing there.

At seventy she wants to know  
Why Vanity and hollow show  
Tempt Wisdom from its lofty seat.  
She wants but ease for gouty feet,  
And peace to wonder what must be  
The last leaf's musings on the tree.

## THE ARCHER'S SHAFT

A FEATHERED arrow to his bow  
The archer Hatred fitted taut,  
Drew tight the bowstring, kneeling low,  
And forth a venom'd message shot.

So full his quiver he forgot,  
Ere died the twang of his bowstring,  
The poisoned shaft that forth he shot,  
The venom'd message set a-wing.

Until, as through the wood he sped  
Another day, he found it where  
A heart, fell stricken, lying dead,  
The shaft had pierced and quivered there.

## THE DESPAIRING MUSE

SOMEBODY has stolen the old garden gate,  
The millwheel has gone to decay,  
The old oaken bucket is missing of late,  
It must have been taken away.  
The little red school house is wrecked and torn down  
Neglected its sad ruins lie,  
The moths have quite eaten up grandmother's gown,  
The old swimming hole has gone dry.

Somebody has taken the old trundle bed,  
And broken the old cookie jar,  
The old milking stool in its wreckage is spread  
Out there where the chopping blocks are;  
The old lilac bushes that grew in the yard  
Are pulled up and missing somehow;  
Ah me, but the prospect is bitter and hard,  
For what shall we write about now?

The old rustic bridge is a wreck by the brook,  
They've paid off the mortgage, I see,  
Whose trials and tears have filled many a book,  
And cut down the old apple tree;  
The old dry goods box at the grocery store  
Is split into kindlings at last,  
The day of the Neighborhood Poet is o'er,  
His verses are things of the past.

## THE DESPAIRING MUSE

The old log and dead that was there by the creek  
Has fallen down into the stream,  
No more may we sit there and patiently seek  
To weave the old days in a dream ;  
The old attic bedroom's a thing of the past,  
The old iron pump is no more,  
And here by the kitchen we stand quite aghast :  
They've pulled up the old cellar door !

The old cottage organ is hopelessly lost,  
The rain barrel's gone to decay,  
The old stepping stones we so frequently crossed  
Somebody has taken away.  
They've rebuilt the house, so old-fashioned and queer,  
And butchered the old brindle cow ;  
Ah, Muse, let us go ! We are not welcome here !  
But what shall we write about now ?

## THE TOYS OF YESTERYEAR

PRAY, where are the toys of Yesteryear:  
The jumping-jack with its flaring red,  
The fuzzy dog and the antlered deer,  
The drum with its sticks and tuneful head,  
The Noah's ark with its wooden crew,  
The building blocks with the letters on?  
The child has toys that are bright and new,  
But where, pray where, have the old friends gone?

Somewhere in the attic in corner dark  
The jumping-jack and the split drum lie,  
The wooden crew of the Noah's ark  
And the tin of the battered infantry.  
There, half by the rubbish and dust concealed,  
The fuzzy dog and the wooden deer,  
The building blocks with their colors peeled  
Half off; and the stringless top is here.

## THE TOYS OF YESTERYEAR

Pray, where are the toys of the Yesteryear,  
The gaudy dreams with their colors gay,  
The castled hopes that were passing dear,  
The joys of our boyhood's merry play?  
The man has toys that are bright and new,  
On the wreck of dreams new dreams appear,  
But where are the hopes of the flaring hue  
That were our toys of the Yesteryear?

Somewhere in the darkness the dead dreams fade,  
The broken idol and shattered vase,  
The castled hopes in their ruins laid  
Come here to a common trysting place.  
Half hid by the rubbish and dust of days  
The wrecks of unnumbered dreams are here  
That made us glad in a hundred ways,  
And these are the toys of the Yesteryear.

## THE SECRET

THERE'S a little word called "Sweetheart;" it's as old  
as heaven's blue;  
'Tis the sweetest word e'er spoken and its joy is ever  
new;  
It was Love's first murmured message, spoken in the  
ears of Love,  
When the Earth took shape from nothing and the blue  
sky arched above;  
It has come through Time unmeasured; it has lived  
unnumbered years;  
It was born of smiles and laughter and has dried  
Grief's countless tears;  
It's the magic soul of Music and the living fire of Art,  
And I've chosen it to give thee—just that little word—  
"Sweetheart."

Ah, the aching hearts and heavy it has bidden hea  
and smile;  
It has bidden Youth be merry and has cheered the  
Afterwhile  
Of the years to peace and gladness and the dreary days  
and long  
Are forgotten in the glory of its whispered evensong.

## THE SECRET

It has made the heart go leaping of the schoolboy at his play;

It has filled with gladder dreaming all the sunshine of his day;

It has bridged world-sundered chasms and has played the noblest part

In the life and strife of being—just that little word—“Sweetheart.”

It has cheered the eve of battles ; it has fired the Heart of Dawn ;

It has braved the mouth of cannon and has borne war's banners on ;

It has lured the soldier Deathward, where the scarp was red and steep ;

It has trembled like a blessing on the ashen lips of Sleep ;

It has hushed the cry of children ; it has fired the souls of men,

Beaten back on shores of Failure to be bold and strong again ;

In the hermit's cloistered silence or in Traffic's busy mart,

It is of all, in all, through all—just that little word “Sweetheart.”

## THE SECRET

And forever and forever through the endlessness of Time,  
It shall hallow song and story and shall be the soul of rhyme;  
It shall be a part of Being, much as heartbeat, much as breath,  
It shall be the joy of living and the overthrow of Death;  
So I bid thee kneel and listen till I whisper thee the key,  
Till I tell thee why is Labor, Life, Love, Death, and Mystery;  
Hut or palace, serf or master, clod or genius, toil or art,  
It is of all, in all, through all—just that little word  
“Sweetheart.”

## VANITIES

“GIVE me Fame,” cried the genius.  
The wizard’s smile was grim;  
His arm stretched forth and a tasteless fruit  
Plucked from a rotten limb.  
“I seek, sir, Fame,” cried the genius,  
“Ye have given me instead  
A rotten fruit.” The wizard spoke:  
“This is Fame,” he said.

“Give me Power,” cried the monarch.  
The wizard smiled again.  
A crown of thorns he gave to him  
And a sword with a bloody stain.  
“But I seek Power,” cried the monarch,  
“What have ye given instead?”  
The wizard spoke: “I tell thee, Sire,  
These are Power,” he said.

## VANITIES

“Give me Love,” cried the maiden.  
The wizard sadly smiled;  
A bleeding heart he gave to her,  
And the form of a cold, dead child.  
“I asked for Love,” mused the maiden,  
“Ye have given me Grief instead.”  
The wizard sighed and softly spoke:  
“Love is Grief,” he said.

“Give me Peace,” cried the weary soul.  
The wizard laughed aloud,  
Drew forth from his store of treasure  
And gave to him a shroud.  
“I asked for Peace,” he shuddered,  
“Ye gave me Death, instead.”  
The wizard mused. “I tell thee  
That this is Peace,” he said.

## THE TOWN OF IMPOSSIBLEVILLE

I LIVE in the town of Impossibleville—a village eccentric and nice,  
Where no matter how hot is the Midsummer day the iceman leaves plenty of ice;  
The dairyman never once waters the milk, but leaves yellow cream in his wake;  
The baker gives always a full loaf of bread and the butcher serves porterhouse steak.  
The coal man gives two thousand pounds for a ton, nor weighs up the man with his load,  
There isn't a lawyer, a judge or a court and the old, Golden Rule is the Code.  
It lies in the valley 'twixt Honesty Flats and the top of Millenium hill.  
And is peopled by poets and dreamers and such—is the town of Impossibleville.

'Tis a wonderful place is Impossibleville, where there's never a scramble for pelf,  
And the rights of man's neighbors are valued as high as the rights that he claims for himself.  
No hand-organ man on the street ever grinds out his ancient, soul-harrowing tunes,  
Nor the man who must board haunted three times a day with small dishes of watery prunes;

## THE TOWN OF IMPOSSIBLEVILLE

There's only one church in Impossibleville and that's  
about all that it needs,  
Nor do people lose sight of the kernel of good in the  
chaff of their musty old creeds.  
It's just over there where the Golden Rule Heights  
overlook the green vale of Goodwill  
And it's peopled with folks it might please you to meet  
is the town of Impossibleville.

The sewing society there never meets unless there is  
something to sew,  
Good deeds are the coin of the realm and no man but  
may settle in Millionaire's Row.  
The cider's all made from the ripest of fruit and open  
at bottom or top,  
The barrel of apples looks equally good for there's  
only one salable crop.  
No matter what happens the cook never quits, nor ever  
was known one to scold,  
The weather is perfect the whole livelong year, nor  
ever too hot or too cold;  
It's right over there 'twixt the town of Don't Fret and  
the top of Millenium Hill  
And is peopled with poets and dreamers and such—is  
the town of Impossibleville.

## THE TOWN OF IMPOSSIBLEVILLE

If you'd reach the cool shades of Impossibleville, you  
must start on your journey in Youth,  
Turn aside from the main-traveled road and set foot  
on the little used pathway of Truth,  
Press on past the town of Fair Play and Don't Fret till  
you climb up the Golden Rule Heights,  
And then you may look down the vale of Good Cheer  
and see all of these wonderful sights ;  
But many have set out with hope and light hearts  
determined to reach this fair spot  
Who someway have strayed from the little-used path  
and are lost in the wastes of Dry Rot,  
But it's right over there 'twixt the town of Fair Play  
and the top of Millenium Hill,  
And it's peopled with poets and dreamers and such—  
is the town of Impossibleville.

## THE TOAST OF MERRIMENT

Good humor! Let's have more of it;  
Let's spice the wine of life with wit;  
The little day we tarry here  
Let flow the sunshine of good cheer.  
Find not in sober sense such zest  
We have no time for quip or pest,  
Nor o'er our tasks so roundly bent  
We drink no toast to merriment.

Oh, you whose sober self all gowned  
With gloom, and who so oft has frowned,  
A smile could scarce find resting place  
Upon your worn and wrinkled face,  
Let loose a laugh, to tell the world  
Your heart's dried substance has not curled  
Like a wormed nut, to rattle in  
Your moldy shell of bone and skin.

## THE TOAST OF MERRIMENT

And you, whose soul is so engrossed  
With duns and dollars, drink the toast  
And let your honest laughter teach  
Your stunted sense the sweeter speech  
Of merriment. From your tired head  
Remove the gallows-hood of dread  
Lest you should miss a wage or fee  
And wear this cap and bells with me.

A thousand years your mummied skin  
Will have no seed of laughter in,  
And in your sober grave find rest  
All undisturbed of quip and jest.  
Then be not sullen, sordid, dull,  
An ever-walking funeral,  
But laugh, for you and Laughter when  
You part may never meet again.

## A PLAIN LITTLE WOMAN

JUST a plain little woman, with plain little ways,  
Who "tidies" the parlor with sweeping and dusting;  
Whose nights are for resting between two tired days,  
Whose faith is abiding, Heaven-seeking, God-trusting;

A tired little woman, who puts lads to bed,  
And lassies, and tucks them all in with caressing;  
Who breathes a sweet prayer over each little head,  
And devoutly knows God and the worth of His blessing.

A worn little woman, yet wearing a smile  
That resists the attack of all time upon beauty;  
Who is, oh, such a distance from fashion and style,  
But always so close upon patience and duty;  
Whose days are a struggle of making ends meet,  
Whose brow is deep lined with the real cost of living,  
Whose soul has been tried fifty years and found sweet,  
Who knows naught of getting, but knows all of giving.

A good little woman, who somehow has learned  
The lesson of faith that withstands every trial,  
Whose wifehood and motherhood nobly have earned  
The crown of her glory with thorns of denial;  
A real little woman, who gives to the world  
Her children, reared up in the ways of right living;  
Whose brow is all laureled, whose heart is all pearled  
With year in and year out of loving and giving.

## A PLAIN LITTLE WOMAN

A glad little woman for just a dim ray  
Of light in this world with its wonder and splendor;  
Who is never too tired at the close of her day  
To be watchful with love that is wistful and tender;  
Who knits and who patches and over her thread  
And needle and yarn in the nighttime is bending,  
When all of her world and its treasures in bed,  
Whose rest ne'er begins and whose tasks never  
ending.

A plain little woman with plain little ways,  
Whose life is, God knows, such a dull little story;  
Who mothers a brood all her tired little days—  
What measure of treasure shall be hers in glory!  
Who knows her as I do, and treasures the smile  
That resists the attacks of all time upon beauty;  
Whose ways were so far cast from fashion and style,  
But, oh, who walked close beside patience and duty?

## A FRIEND WENT THEN

HUSH! A friend went then;  
Went with a tear of sorrow in his eye;  
A friend too old to lose, too young to die;  
Went at a hasty word of mine and hot;  
Grieved in his inner heart and then—was not;  
He lives and speaks with me, but naught beside,  
My friend has died.

Hush! A friend passed on;  
Passed on in silence, uncomplainingly;  
Nor stopped to parry angry words with me;  
Passed on, sore hurt, but keeping back his tears,  
Passed on upon the stony way of years;  
Well knowing me, but though he bows his head—  
My friend is dead.

Hush! A friend is lost;  
A sneer of mine, that cost me but a breath,  
And fell my friend, sore wounded, to his death;  
Nor made he any cry to tell the pain  
He felt—just went and came not back again;  
And though to-day again our pathways crossed,  
My friend is lost.

Hush! A friend was slain;  
Just then—struck down in the broad light of day;  
As fell a crime, I know, as ever lay  
At murder's door—it cost me but a jeer  
At him who craved but sympathy—a tear  
I shed and bid him come to me in vain—  
My friend is slain.

## ALONE

I THINK ten million worlds there be  
Instead of one; and ten times ten;  
A world for you and one for me;  
A world for each one soul again;  
And each is peopled with its dreams,  
Its hot ambitions and desires;  
Each has its fields and running streams,  
And its low burning altar fires.

And you and I walk far apart,  
You in your world and I in mine;  
You with the comrades of your heart  
And dreams, and cheering suns may shine  
Upon the ways you go, and I  
May speak with you, but from you far  
As deeps of sea from vaulted sky,  
As pit of earth from peak of star.

Each life a universe where runs  
Space I may fathom not or you;  
Its independent course of suns,  
Its sunshine, shower, and its dew;  
Each throb of heart, each thrill of soul  
A blazing comet in the blue,  
And lightnings flash and billows roll  
For me, but all unseen to you.

## ALONE

Across a chasm black as ink  
And deep as chaos we join hands  
In hollow greeting, and we drink  
A pledge, and neither understands.  
And we set out upon the way,  
Each with his world of mind and heart,  
And will be as we have been aye,  
A hundred million miles apart.

So what of us may be the soul  
Walks all alone upon its way  
To its extinction or its goal,  
Where spirits greet or worms decay ;  
Walks all alone and none may see  
What dreams may be or what have been,  
Your world for you, my world for me,  
That none may know or enter in.

## TRIFLES

HE took a little flyer,  
That was all;  
He thought he knew the wire  
Had the call.

He took a little flyer  
And he went up high and higher;  
Now his fat is in the fire,  
That is all.

He played a little poker,  
That was all;  
When his wife complained he'd joke her—  
Stakes were small.

He played a little poker  
At a purely social smoker,  
And he died dead-broke or broke-er,  
That is all.

He used to play the horses,  
That was all;  
Had tips from all the courses  
For a haul.  
He used to play the horses  
Till he used up his resources;  
Now he knows just what remorse is,  
That is all.

## TRIFLES

He was just a rare good fellow,  
That was all;  
Without a streak of yellow  
Great or small.

He was just a rare good fellow  
And his moods were often mellow.  
What! Another shortage? Hello!  
That is all.

He only meant to borrow,  
That is all;  
To put it back tomorrow,  
Sum was small.

He only meant to borrow,  
But he found out to his sorrow  
That it never comes tomorrow,  
That is all.

## THE GRADUATE

WHO, when the graduate comes home, begowned, be-  
ribboned and belearned,  
Are there to meet him and to reap the joys their years  
of toil have earned?  
Who gaze with awe upon his face, with love into his  
scholar's eye,  
And wonder what great glories hold for him the hands  
of Destiny?  
Who air his room and fluff his bed and count upon the  
calendar  
The days to pass till he shall come from where the seats  
of Learning are?  
Who watch his lips whene'er they move and some clear  
pearl of Wisdom falls?  
'Tis Mother in her gingham gown and Father in his  
overalls.  
  
Who glory in the strength he has ; who wonder at the  
way he grows ;  
Who pin their faith to him alone and marvel at the  
much he knows ;  
Who sit and hear him speak, with awe, that so much  
wisdom should o'erflow  
From lips that were a little boy's, oh ! such a little  
while ago ?

## THE GRADUATE

Who rise at dawn to do the chores that he may rest  
and so regain  
The vigor that was sapped beneath his Alma Mater's  
nervous strain?  
And who, at eight o'clock or nine, goes to his door  
and gently calls?  
'Tis Mother in her gingham gown or Father in his  
overalls.

Who was it, all those years ago, when times were  
hard and crops were small,  
Talked long at night of ways and means and John  
to go to school that Fall?  
Who saved and patched and self-denied, who stood  
above the dripping churn,  
Who walked the furrow with the plow that John  
might fare afar and learn?  
Who read his letters once a week by one dim candle's  
fitful gleam,  
When he was gaining deathless fame as half-back on  
the college team?  
And who could dream and hear his voice ring out  
through Wisdom's classic halls?  
'Twas Mother in her gingham gown and Father in his  
overalls.

## THE GRADUATE

Who stand behind the scenes to prompt and cheer and  
speed him in the play?  
Whose hands and hearts are ever warm to guide and  
help him on his way?  
Who never lost their faith in him, whose love abides  
through all the years?  
Who ask no more—that he's come home—for all the  
time of toil and tears?  
So when his thesis is prepared, when with rare elo-  
quence he cries:  
“Who are the Heroes? What is Fame? Who saves the  
State? Where Honor Lies?”  
I see the Heroes, Saviors, stand behind him as the cur-  
tain falls,  
See Mother in her gingham gown and Father in his  
overalls.

## THE PLACE BEYOND

THEY call the Place To-Morrow—After While,  
The Way, Be-Patient, Keep-of-Heart-and-Cheer;  
'Tis over there, a bit beyond the stile,  
A little farther on, but never here.

And all day long and through the fretful night  
I saw them struggle, toil, keep dreaming on  
Through valleys, up the hills and o'er the height,  
But ever when they reached there it was gone!

And if they toiled a mile, it moved a mile  
Along the road. At break of every day  
They thought to reach it in a little while  
But at the dusk it seemed as far away  
As when the day began; they saw the lights  
That flickered through the dusk a weary mile,  
Along the road, and some toiled on o' nights,  
They call the Place To-morrow—After While!

And some fell faint and some were red and strong  
With coursing blood that would not be denied.  
If through the valleys dim the way was long,  
The Place was just upon the other side.  
If up the hills the journey led and steep  
And rough the way, the bells of it rang clear,  
And some I saw to run and some to creep,  
And fell a curse, and now and then a tear.

## THE PLACE BEYOND

Oft in the twilight, voices from the dusk  
About the Place bade fallen men to rise,  
Fame sang the glories of her certain Husk  
And Beauty lured men on with wanton eyes;  
Worn women heard the chant of Rest, so near,  
And yet no nearer ever, day on day,  
But Oh, the bells at Vespers echoed clear—  
They call the Place To-morrow—or Someday!

They call the Place To-Morrow—After While,  
With gleaming tower on tower and spire on spire,  
It rises there, ten leagues, a league, a mile  
Beyond the day—the City of Desire!  
Long days of Rest are there, and Joy and Peace  
And Music and Content and Sorrows Done,  
Of Dreams Come True and Longings Bidden Cease,  
Of Weary Hearts Made Glad and Struggles Won.

So I will join you, Brother, on the Way  
They call Have-Patience, Be-of-Heart-and-Cheer,  
And we will look a league beyond the day  
Whence come the voices, musical and clear;  
'Tis just across the valley, o'er the height,  
Adown the road, a step beyond the stile.  
Let's toil a day and dream another night—  
They call the Place To-morrow—After While!

## COMRADES

I WANT to meet the Day  
With gladness and a smile ;  
I want to keep the Way  
With hopefulness the while ;  
I want to see the task  
With clearness and delight,  
All this I come to ask,  
And sleep and peace at night.

I want to be content  
And yet unsatisfied ;  
To do the things I meant  
To do, or know I tried.  
I want to see in dusk  
And sunset's flaming fire  
A beacon—not the husk  
Of day's unfilled desire.

Whoso may go my way  
I want to walk with me ;  
To hope with if I may,  
To pray with if need be.  
Whoso may teach, to learn  
Of him whereof I need,  
Whoso may learn, to preach  
Perhaps a better creed.

## COMRADES

Whoso is weak, to bring  
    My strength where e'er he lies;  
Whoso is strong, to cling  
    To him that I may rise.  
Whoso may grieve, to brave  
    With him the quivering lip,  
Whoso may smile, to crave  
    A joyous fellowship.

Will you not walk with me  
    Upon the way awhile?  
I crave your sympathy,  
    I offer you a smile.  
The way be steep and long,  
    I ask to grasp your hand,  
I offer you a song;  
    Will you not understand?

## THE DISSENTERS

SCALPEL declares it's my liver;  
Says I need surgery bad;  
Capsule says it makes him shiver,  
Cuttin' has grown such a fad;  
Scalpel says I'll not be better  
Till I come down an' git fixed,  
Capsule says wrong to the letter—  
Gosh, how this Science is mixed!

Sheepskin declares he can fix it  
So they can't filch my estate;  
Shingle says Sheepskin'll mix it  
So it will never git straight;  
Sheepskin says lawyers won't bust it  
Once I let him git it fixed,  
Shingle says he wouldn't trust it—  
Gosh, how this will-drawin's mixed!

## THE DISSENTERS

Churchbell says Heaven—he knows it—  
    Lies right this way—knows it well;  
Choker says whoever goes it  
    Won't land in Heaven but Hell;  
Churchbell says humblin' th' spirit  
    Brings a man right to th' gate,  
Choker says that's nowhere near it—  
    Even religion ain't straight!

Capsule is treatin'—or near it—  
    What he calls biliary chill;  
Churchbell is mendin' my spirit,  
    Shingle is drawin' my will;  
Talk about wisdom's advances,  
    Why, when it's all done an' said,  
Looks like I'm takin' long chances  
    Looks like I'm takin' long chances  
    Livin' an' dyin' an' dead!

## AIRCASLTETOWN

A TRUCE to thy struggling, poor mortal who strives;  
A rest to thy efforts poor, hungering soul;  
Come, Need, cast away all thy harrowing gyves,  
And, Sorrow, I'll take thee where dreams are made  
whole.

Here in the dim twilight we'll sit by and dream;  
Our fancies stray far as the light thistledown,  
For, red as the sunrise, the golden rays gleam  
Over there on the hilltops, near Aircastletown.

Ah, light as the leaf on the wandering breeze  
We'll float in our dreams from these sorrows away,  
Where fruit of fulfillment is ripe on the trees  
And sunlight of hope never dims night or day.  
So here at the twilight we'll float with the tide  
Of ungoverned fancy, nor borrow a frown  
From the face of tomorrow, but carelessly glide  
Down the stream of our dreamings to Aircastletown.

## AIRCASTLETOWN

My cottage a palace, my palace a King's,  
All peopled with dreams by some magic come true;  
My wicket a drawbridge that never once swings  
At the summons of Care—and, ah, best of all, You!  
A fig for the cares that beset me the day,  
The smile of fulfillment swift conquers my frown,  
For the sails of my dreams to the winds dip away  
And I'm off for a journey to Aircastle town.

What seek ye? Some treasure by Caprice denied?  
What would ye? Some toy Fate might find thee  
with ease?  
What ask ye? Some fair wind and flood of the tide  
To bring home thy argosy, far on the seas?  
Then truce to thy dreamings—come journey with me,  
On wings fine and airy as light thistledown,  
And here at the twilight come sit, dream, and see  
Thy longings come true there in Aircastle town.

## YESTERDAY

TAKE ye the laurel and the crown,  
The hollow pomp and cold renown;  
The loveless toys of skill or art,  
The wealth that mocks the aching heart;  
Ambition's fire, fame or degree,  
Take every sense but memory,  
From future's hopes strike every ray,  
And give us back sweet yesterday.

Give back the youth that's lived its day,  
The sweet song sung and died away;  
The hopes that lured, the voices stilled,  
The promises all unfulfilled;  
The flowers that bloomed to fret and fade,  
The joys in dust and embers laid;  
The tears that fall, wipe them away,  
And give us back sweet yesterday.

The light that's lost no eye shall find;  
No hand shall stay the joys that wind  
Through the long corridors of Time,  
Or lure with lute or tempt with rhyme;  
No cry—no prayer, no agony,  
Shall stay the step of Time for thee,  
Nor call from dust and doom away  
The flown delights of yesterday.

## THE INEXORABLE

SEEK not to fathom Fate's decree ;  
Whatever has been was to be.  
Not all the sighs of Time could stay  
The heavy hand she seeks to lay ;  
Not all the tears of all the years  
Could blot one page from yesterday.

Seek not to see beyond the cloud,  
To fathom depths beneath the shroud ;  
Thy little knowledge soars in vain,  
To beat its wings in dust again.  
It is thy doom to dwell in gloom  
Till Death shall see thee rest or reign.

Thou canst alone hope some wise plan  
Pervades the destiny of man ;  
That purposes divine are blent  
With what seems chance or accident.  
That out afar, the falling star  
Sees purpose to its mission bent.

Thou art a prisoner here, alone,  
And helpless as the sod or stone ;  
Small as on greatness lay'st thou stress,  
Great as thou know'st thy littleness.  
A child of Chance and Circumstance,  
God's infant in thy helplessness.

## THE DEATH OF PRIDE.

SHE was regal and proud.  
Her love bade her stay  
Where her child tossed and moaned and the swift  
nurses glide;  
She was queenly and fair,  
With the rose in her hair,  
But her love lay asleep in the arms of her pride.

She was regal and proud.  
The lights glitter and glow,  
Dreamy the waltzes' glad glamor and glide.  
The wail of a child  
Swift and splendor beguiled,  
She smiled—for her love lay asleep in her pride.

She was stricken and bowed;  
Her wet eyes sought a shroud,  
That sheltered a child—and her anguish was wild;  
But was it all vain  
If pride had e'en slain  
Her love, since her pride lay there dead with her  
child?

## THE FISHERMAN

WHEN I go fishing in the brook  
    Of dreams for verse, you see,  
I only have to bait my hook  
    And wait quite patiently;  
At length a darting little thought  
    Comes nibbling hereabout  
Until my line grows sharply taut—  
    Whereon I pull it out.

Sometimes I wait an hour or so  
    And never get a bite,  
And casts I make and lines I throw,  
    But not a fish in sight;  
And just as I begin to reel  
    The line in my despair  
There comes a pull and I can feel  
    The faintest nibble there.

And then there runs the strangest thrill  
    All through me and I wish  
That everything about be still  
    Lest I should lose my fish;  
And after many a dart and run  
    (For thoughts are slippery things)  
I get it hooked, the fight's begun,  
    And how my good reel sings!

### THE FISHERMAN

But how it darts and swims about  
In shallows and in deeps,  
I pay my line still out and out  
Where the white water sweeps ;  
Betimes I see the flash of fin,  
I know I've hooked it fast,  
And then I reel my fish line in,  
The thought is mine at last.

And sometimes it's a noble trout,  
A marketable fish,  
And sometimes it's a sickly pout,  
Unfit for any dish ;  
For with the fates that rule in dreams  
No bargains may be struck,  
And much that comes from Verse's streams  
Is just plain fisher's luck !

## A REFLECTED DIET

EVERYBODY's dieting some ailment to be quieting, and  
hunger goes a-rioting where plenty once made gay ;  
Ban's on food and fishes, and we have no need for  
dishes, and the stomach of me wishes it could find  
the means to stay

The clamor of its cravings, for its food is mostly shav-  
ings, and it hears naught but the ravings of the  
daily diet list ;

Nothing much for dinner, with a luncheon somewhat  
thinner, and I think as I'm a sinner I shall melt  
away in mist.

Mother's eating little in the way of food or victual  
and abates no jot or tittle of her diet, she's so  
stout ;

Father's stomach presses on his liver and distresses  
him extremely, and he blesses fasts and cuts the  
foodstuffs out ;

Breakfast, ah, 'tis cruel, just a dish of mush or gruel,  
not a stick of worthy fuel for this furnace pit of  
mine ;

Lunch is somewhat lighter, and I pull my belt up  
tighter, and my hopes grow slight and slighter as  
the hour comes to dine.

### A REFLECTED DIET

All the kitchen's quiet since the rage began for diet,  
and the vision of a pie, it would quite turn my  
head, I swear;

Steak is quite forbidden, all the roasting pans are  
hidden, and the cook is crossly chidden if she  
swells our bill-of-fare.

How my pulse would quicken could I look upon a  
chicken and see rich cream gravy thickened in the  
long lost frying-pan!

But the Code Starvation says the bodily elation from  
fried chicken spells damnation to the health of  
modern man.

Aunty is rheumatic, and with language quite emphatic  
says her feelings grow ecstatic on her diet of dry  
toast;

Uncle who is gouty says he has no bit of doubt he  
will be cured by cutting out the steak and stew  
and broil and roast;

Rule One-Twenty-Seven of the Skim-milk route to  
Heaven says no breadstuffs made with leaven may  
be eaten, so pray, tell

What's the consolation for a healthy youth, whose  
ration is a share of gaunt starvation just to make  
some others well?

### A REFLECTED DIET

Mother's getting thinner on no breakfast, lunch or dinner—and her diet is a winner for the stoutness she complains;

Father's girth's reducing since he is no longer using food and drink, and he is losing all his once-so-fearful pains;

Aunty's getting better, keeps her diet to the letter, and dear Uncle he is debtor to the scheme of toast and tea.

Diet works its wonders when assimilation blunders and its praise the family thunders—but it's simply killing me!

## THE OLD SUBSCRIBER

I'VE put up and subscribed till I'm fagged,  
All the way from ten dollars to cents;  
I've been "touched," I've been "worked,"  
I've been "tagged,"  
And the pressure on me is immense.  
I've been ticketed, socialed, pink-tea-d,  
For heathen and less favored folk,  
And my purse has been open to Need  
Till now it is I who am broke.

I have built orphan homes and town halls,  
"Put up," "come across" and "made good."  
I've helped repair Jericho's walls  
As far as my little mite would.  
"Patronized" local talent in art,  
Been "in" on subscriptions galore,  
Because I've had never the heart  
To show any one to the door.

### THE OLD SUBSCRIBER

I have bought Christmas cards for Chinese,  
And subscribed for new pews in the church;  
I have helped out the far-off Burmese,  
I couldn't leave them in the lurch.  
I have reared drinking fountains that ought  
To make the horse rise and cry blessed;  
There isn't a corner or spot  
They haven't put me to the test.

I'm the one and original soul  
Who said: "Put my name down for five."  
I'm the real *summum bonum*—the goal  
Of every cash-seeker alive;  
Just look like Hard Luck on the shoals  
And rattle a paper at me—  
I'm the Past Grand High Priest of Good Souls,  
The real "Old Subscriber"—E. Z.

## A CRITICISM

A DAMSEL stood upon the stage,  
A stage-worn damsel she.  
A critic sat and heard her sing,  
A world-worn critic he.

“I’m saddest when I sing,” she sang,  
A tear stood in her eye.  
He sighed, the wretch, and muttered to  
Himself: “And so am I.”

“I cannot sing the old songs,”  
She sang. Sighed he—“ ’Tis true,  
Two kinds of songs you cannot sing,  
The old ones—and the new.”

“Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing  
I’d give my eyes,” he hears.  
“And I,” he murmured, “had you them,  
Would give away my ears.”

“Had I the wings of any dove,”  
She sang, “I would rejoice.”  
He muttered: “You could make them from  
The feathers in your voice.”

## NEMESIS

THE man who invented the women's waists that button  
down behind,  
And the man who invented the cans with keys and the  
strips that will never wind,  
Were put to sea in a leaky boat and with never a bite  
to eat  
But a couple of dozen of patent cans in which was  
their only meat.

And they sailed and sailed o'er the ocean wide and  
never they had a taste  
Of aught to eat, for the cans stayed shut, and a peek-  
a-boo shirtwaist  
Was all they had to bale the brine that came in the  
leaky boat;  
And their tongues were thick and their throats were  
dry, and they barely kept afloat.

They came at last to an island fair, and a man stood  
on the shore,  
So they flew a signal of distress and their hopes rose  
high once more,  
And they called to him to fetch a boat, for their craft  
was sinking fast,  
And a couple of hours at best they knew was all their  
boat would last.

## NEMESIS

So he called to them a cheery call and he said he would  
make haste,  
But first he must go back to his wife and button up  
her waist,  
Which would only take him an hour or so and then  
he would fetch a boat.  
And the man who invented the backstairs waist, he  
groaned in his swollen throat.

The hours passed by on leaden wings and they saw  
another man  
In the window of a bungalow, and he held a tin meat  
can  
In his bleeding hands, and they called to him, not once  
but twice and thrice,  
And he said: "Just wait till I open this and I'll be  
there in a trice!"

And the man who invented the patent cans, he knew  
what the promise meant,  
So he leaped in the air with a horrid cry and into the  
sea he went,  
And the bubbles rose where he sank and sank and a  
groan choked in the throat  
Of the man who invented the backstairs waist and he  
sank with the leaky boat!

## SPINNING

WE sit at the loom and spin and spin ;  
Thread upon thread is woven in  
To the warp of our lives, and they twine and twine,  
Till the fabric is finished, and, coarse or fine,  
We must don the garment we weave and wear,  
The kind of cloth we have woven there.

The looms of our lives, and they hum and hum ;  
Fine threads and coarse threads to the weavers come.  
Gossamer, light, are the finer strands,  
The threads of good, and our busy hands  
Seek the silk from the tangled thread,  
Or, careless, weave with the coarse instead.

The looms of our lives, and are never still ;  
The threads of good and the threads of ill  
They draw and twine and spin and spin,  
And good or bad is woven in  
With evil thought or with good deed done,  
And the fabric, finished, lies as spun.

## SPINNING

Each spins for himself and each must wear  
The kind of cloth he has woven there ;  
The fruit of thy loom thy choice may hold,  
Be it sackcloth dull or cloth of gold,  
Be it silk or sack it is thine to say,  
But thy choice must be made from the threads today.

The looms of our lives, of heart and brain,  
Each with its shuttle and shaft and chain,  
Each with the thread the weaver fills,  
Each to weave as the weaver wills,  
The looms of our lives, and tread and tread,  
But we are the weavers who choose the thread.

## THE GIFT OF CHARITY

Do a little good in passing, sow some kindness every day;

Stretch a hand to help a struggler who has fallen by the way;

Flash a smile to cheer the mourner, plant a flower to bud and bloom,

Loose a ray of sympathy to pierce with sunlight the thick gloom.

Stop and counsel with the erring, help the fallen one to rise;

Find thy mission on the earth and leave the stars to light the skies;

Whisper comfort to the sobbing, let the sunshine struggle through,

And when Heaven's portals open there will be a place for you.

## THE GIFT OF CHARITY

Be a minister of mercy that true brotherhood may live ;  
Be not hasty in thine anger, doubly ready to forgive ;  
First to see a kindly action, last to doubt its honesty,  
Leaden be thy tongue of censure and thy tongue of  
praising free.

Slow to doubt and quick to cherish every kindness of  
thy friend ;  
Last to misjudge his intention, and the foremost to  
defend ;  
Kindness knows no creed or caste and brotherhood no  
pedigree,  
And the key to Heaven's portals is the Gift of Charity.

## THE DESERTERS

SOMEWHERE upon the sunny air the Boss imagines he  
can hear

The cries that rise and swell and bear the cadence of  
a mighty cheer;

Somewhere afar the bleachers are, the turnstiles and  
the raucous note

The umpire brings, set on a par with growls from some  
trapped grizzly's throat.

Somewhere he calls them strikes or balls, somewhere  
the red-legged runner's stride

From third to home is flattened out into a sweeping,  
screaming slide.

The fever grows the while he knows the fans are  
gathering afar—

He grabs his hat and stick and goes—he's just in time  
to catch a car!

The listless clerk drones o'er his work—far in the dis-  
tance he can see

The bleachers fill, a bitter pill it is for him that he  
must be

Bent o'er his books; and now he looks across those  
miles with hungry eyes

To see in dreams, the struggling teams go forth to  
battle for the prize.

## THE DESERTERS

The music hears he of the spheres, and as the Boss  
goes down the stair  
The fever grows, for well he knows what home-team  
heroes will be there.  
With guilty joy the office boy he tells to say he's called  
away  
By urgent press of business and won't be back till late  
that day.

The click and whirr of typewriter is silent now—she  
sits and sighs  
Upon the letters left for her, a far-off dreaming in her  
eyes;  
What stunts are done by Mathewson! She hears the  
echoes rise and fall;  
She sees the pitcher in the box and hears the umpire  
cry, "Play ball!"  
Oh, that she might see some proud knight drop on his  
knees—Odsblood and Zounds!—  
And hear him say, "Fair lady, pray, I would escort  
thee to the grounds!"  
And then, oh joy! the office boy approaches her and  
mutters, "Mame,  
Get on your lid; the work's all did! Let's go on out  
and see the game!"

## PRIMROSE PARSLEY'S HOUSEHOLD HINTS

I USED to buy my plumes and pay the milliner's outrageous fee,  
But I keep ostriches to-day to raise my ostrich-plumes for me;  
And if a plume grows scant and thin, as plumes are apt to now and then,  
I lift a wing and thrust it in and let it grow out thick again;  
My ostrich does not strut or sing, as prouder birds are wont to do,  
But I find almost every spring he sheds a feather boa or two,  
So thus by true economy my savings plethoric have grown,  
I think that every family should keep an ostrich of its own.

I used to buy my silk and pay a fancy price, but now I keep  
My own silkworms and so to-day they spin my dresses while I sleep;  
The cost of keeping them is small—I think the plan works very well,  
And if I do not use it all I always have some silk to sell;

## PRIMROSE PARSLEY'S HOUSEHOLD HINTS

Thus I avoid the tariff charge, which rises to enormous terms,  
For while the tax on silk is large there is no duty on the worms;  
I let them out each day at dawn; to care for them is never hard,  
And if I keep them on the lawn they always spin silk by the yard.

I used to buy my pearls—somehow I find it much the better way  
To keep a few pearl oysters now and pick my own pearls day by day;  
To buy a necklace in the store is not a matter of much sense  
When I can raise one worth much more at home with very small expense.  
And when I wear the pearls I grow I am the cynosure of eyes,  
For people do not seem to know that profit lies in being wise;  
Once pearls were far above my lot, but now my hands and neck and brow  
Are white with them—you see I've got an oyster working for me now.

## PRIMROSE PARSLEY'S HOUSEHOLD HINTS

I used to buy my hair barrettes, but lately I do twice  
as well—  
I have a tortoise now who lets me come to him for  
tortoise-shell;  
In days like these, when naught is cheap, to practice  
true economy  
Young married folk should always keep a tortoise in  
the family;  
Thus knowledge is the source of power, as from these  
words you plainly see,  
And Nature in an idle hour works wondrous ends for  
you and me;  
When summer's glorious day unfurls, life thus becomes  
one grand, sweet song,  
By raising shell and silk and pearls and ostrich-plumes  
I get along.

## THE LEPER AND THE BELL

AND as the leper with the bell,  
So some men through their lives must bear  
Faces that serve the world as well  
To tell the unclean hiding there.  
And though the leper, shunned, conceals  
His bell, and quiets its shrill stroke,  
Some quick, unthinking step reveals  
Its jingling presence, 'neath his cloak.

## SONG

Not the mysterious music of the heights,  
The grandeur of harmony whose eagling flights  
Wing us to clouds dim, distant, dark, and dull.  
Give us the simple songs that, free and full,  
Find echo in our hearts, as when we lift  
The lattice, that through all the house may drift  
The red-robed robin's twittering song, that wings  
Its flight by the vined window as it sings.

## THE POWER OF LOVE

THE thunder of Hate may be lost on the gale,  
May be stilled in the storm, in the tempest may fail,  
But the whisper of Love wings unerring its way  
From a star to a star, through the ages for aye.

## THE DEAD

SOME sleep under the sighing pine,  
And some sleep under the snow ;  
Some where flowers toss and twine,  
And some where oceans flow.  
Some where the glacier growls and grinds,  
And some 'neath the cool, green sod ;  
But all sleep the same sleep, and waking finds  
Each one in the arms of God.

## THE CUP WILL PASS

THE cup will pass,  
How bitter may it be;  
Though thou mayst drain  
Its deepest dreg and lee,  
A sweeter wine  
Some day will brim the glass,  
The draught be thine;  
The bitter cup will pass.

## THE LOST CHANCE

UPON the stream of Life we see  
    The ship of Opportunity  
Cast loose from wharf and pier,  
    And slip to sea; alone we stand,  
Forsaken in a lonely land,  
    Beset with fear on fear.  
Across the wave we cry and call:  
    “Ho! Wait! Ho! Wait! Ho! Wait!”  
The mocking echoes fly and fall:  
    “Too late! Too late! Too late!”

## LOST OPPORTUNITIES

SWEET songs, half whispering to me in the solitude  
Of sweeter melody they might have sung,  
And phantom flowers that scent for me the leafy wood  
With wraiths of the perfume they might have flung.  
Sweet faces smiling dimly through the shadowy light,  
Ghosts of the full perfection that had shown,  
Had not the sun gone down ere it was night,  
Leaving but shadows of the unfulfilled, alone.







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